

WEIGHTY
CONSIDERATIONS
FOR
Tender Conscientious
PROTESTANTS:

Wherein is shewed Their
OBLIGATION
To hold Close Union and Communion
WITH THE
CHURCH of *England*,
And not to forsake the Publick Assem-
bly thereof.

In several Sermons Preach'd upon *i Cor. i.*
10. That ye all speak the same thing. And
Heb. 10. 25. Not forsaking the Assembly of
our selves. To which is added Three Ser-
mons more,

- I. *The Nature and Danger of a mis-guided Conscience.*
- II. *The Subtilty and Pestilent Nature of Seducers.*
- III. *The Properties of Heavenly Wisdom.*

Sold by Obadiah Blagrave at the Bear in St. Pauls
Church-Yard, 1687.

COMPARISON
WEIGHTS

of
SUGAR
CONTENTS

OF
HONEY

CONTINUATION

OF
CHART OF
SUGAR
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OF
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CONTINUATION

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THE
OBLIGATION
OF
CONSCIENCE
TO
UNION
AND
COMMUNION
WITH
FELLOW-CHRISTIANS.

1 Corinth. 1, & 10. part of it.

That ye all speake the same thing, and that
there be no divisions amongst you: but that
ye be perfectly joyned together in the same
mind, and in the same judgement.

IT is a sound and useful observation, that Mr. Baxter makes in his *Cure of Church-Divisions*. There is in many Christians (alas) a strange partiality in their apprehensions of good and evil. Some Duties they dare not omit, and they judge all ungodly that omit them:

B whilst

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whilst some other duties, as great as they, are past by and neglected, as if they were no part of Religion : and on the contrary some sins they fear with very great tenderness, when their Teachers can scarce make their Consciences take any notice of others, as great and damnable. The Papist seems so sensible of the good of unity, and the evil of divisions, that he thinks even Tyranny and horrid bloodshed, and an Usurpation of an universal Monarchy in the Church, to be not onely lawful, but also necessary for the cure and prevention : in the mean time to make him as sensible of the sinfulness of these unlawful means, and the necessity of a serious, spiritual righteousness, and Christian love and meekness, and forbearance, is a very difficult, almost impossible thing. On the other side, many that are really desirous to be serious and spiritual in Religion, abhorring all hypocritical formality therein, or any usurpation of the Prerogative of Christ, or any persecuting pride or cruelty, are yet strangely senseless ; and careless of the good of unity, and the mischiefs of divisions in the Church. Its sad that sacred fire of zeal should be so unequally acted, and dis-

distributed, all let out upon some Duties, and against some sins, which others as necessary are as strangely overlookt. It brings to mind that cutting reprehension of the Pharisees by our Saviour, (a fit Looking-glass for many Zealots in our Age, so partial in God's Law) (a) *Woe unto you Pharisees* (saith Christ) *for ye tithe Mint, and Rue, and all manner of Herbs, and pass over judgement, and the love of God: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* Well, of men will submit to the word of God; the antidote against this strange partiality, in the matter instanced, of Christian union and concord, is easily provided; there being almost innumerable rules and precepts in the Scriptures to convince us of it. Amongst which this Text is as full as any. *Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement.*

Thus St. Paul wrote with his Brother *softenes* to the Church of God, which was at *Corinth*, nor wrote he so to them only: but (b) *with them to all that in every*

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every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours : The words then are spoken to us also, and all Believers in all places to the Worlds end. Now the Apostle intending to condemn many vices in these Corinthians, that he might not seem to do it out of malice, or spleen, or envy, he begins first with a true commendation of their gifts and virtues , that they were enriched in all knowledg, and in all utterance, that they came behind others in no gift (c). But alas, as knowledge is

verse 7.

apt to puffe us up , so these Corinthians began in their pride to divide themselves

verse 12.

from each other : So that (d) one cryed, I am for *Paul*, another I am for *Apollo*, and a third I am for *Cephas*; therefore to make way for a sharp reproof hereof, the Apostle brings in this grave obtettation in the text.

Now, *I beseech you* (faith he) though I might be bold in Christ to enjoyn and command; yet for love sake I rather beseech you. *I beseech you, Brethren*, I do it in the bowels and affections of a brother : Nay , and by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, by the power and authority of Christ, and for the honour and glory of Christ. I Paul so speak as if Christ himself did speak unto you. (For, alas, how

how the name of God, and how the Doctrine of Christ is blasphemed through your divisions, he that runs may read it) and therefore for his sake I beseech you. *By the Name of our Lord,* that is by virtue of that commission and authority, I have received from him, who is our Lord, and if he be our Lord, where is his honour: and in *the Name of our Lord Jesus,* he who is your Saviour, and as you hope for Salvation by him: *Our Lord Jesus Christ,* he that is the anoynted of God, anoynted to be our Prophet, Priest and King; every word in the obtestation hath a sufficient weight to awaken us to attend it. What even this exhortation, *I beseech you, Brethren, by that Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye perfectly be joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement.* It is a strange kind of earnestness, and importunity the Apostle useth, as elsewhere, so here, in this matter. He was deeply sensible of the evil of divisions, how they prejudice Gods truth; for whilst they that profess it, cannot agree in it, the Fool is ready to scoff at it, *and to say in heart there is no God:* and how they endanger the Church

and weaken it; no engine, that Satan and Anti-christ can use, more than this, the cutting of it into shreds, like the Levites Concubine; the blowing of the Coals of contention in it: yea, how they endanger the Souls of men, by separating them from the Church, and so from Christ, who is the head thereof. The Apostle was deeply sensible of the evil of divisions, and therefore is strangely, and more than ordinarily importunate in this Exhortation, ushering it in with manifold obtestations.

See Phil. 2. 1, 2, If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any compassion and mercy, fulfil my joy, that you be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Ephes. 4. 1, I the Prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy of that vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Rom. 16. 17, 18, Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them that cause divisions among you, and avoid them, for they serve not our Lord Jesus; But to name no more, this in the Text is full enough, Now I beseech you Brethren, by the

the Name of our Lord Jefus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, &c. that there be no divisions among you.

Which words being apparently an exhortation, must be handled in such method, as best sates with the nature thereof.

1. I must explain and propound it.

2. I must enforce and urge it by explication. I shall lay open the nature and extent of the (*objecuum quod*) or duty to which we are exhorted. And then for the enforcing of it, I shall press sundry powerful motives upon your Consciences, to engage you to endeavour to practise it, and lay down wholesome rules and directions, for the better performing it, if the Lord inable me, the time permit, and your christian patience give encouragement.

1. To propound the Exhortation, I need not at all insist upon the words, they are so plain and intelligible in themselves, that being read, they may as easily be understood; and to offer to give any sense of them particularly, one by one, might render them more dark and obscure. Let it suffice to tell you, that the matter of duty in them contained is the unity of the Church, and the concord of Christians.

An universal accord amongst them is to be endeavoured, so far as is possible in judgement, affection and action, this is the sum and substance of the Text.

1. The Exhortation is to an unity in judgement; so the Apostle expressly prescribes it, in the latter words, *that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and the same judgment.* It is a thing much to be desired, and by all good means to be endeavoured, that (according to our Churches prayer) God would give to all Nations, Unity, Peace, and Concord, but especially that all, that do profess his holy Name, may also agree in the truth of his holy Word, at least, in the main and most substantial truths thereof, and so that they may be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement. But if this cannot be hoped for and attained in this life; yet,

2. That we must be sure of to endeavour to preserve an unanimity in heart and affection. Desired it must be, but hoped for it cannot be, that in the Church of God there should be no noise of Axes and Hammers, no difference in judgements and conceits. (e) *There must be Heresies,* saith the Apostle, *that they that are approved*
e 2Cor. 11. 19.
may

may be made manifest. There must be Heresies, even as we use to say, that that will be must be ; his meaning is, there will be Heresies, there is no help for it, the wit of men cannot help it.

The understandings of men are not all of one size and temper, God hath distributed his gifts unto men severally as he pleaseth, and even they that transcend in the same gifts, and have the largest and clearest understandings, yet *they know but in part, and see through a glass darkly* and imperfectly, and so are subject to divers errors and misapprehensions. To which narrowness of our faculties, add the consideration of the corruptions that is in our natures, and disposition ; by reason of that pride that naturally aboundeth in us, being self-willed and turbulent; for the heart of Man is a fowre piece of clay, woundrous stubborn and churlish, so that the best man is not able to take down his own pride sufficiently : there is more ado with this one Viper, than with all our other corruptions besides ; and all those wars and fightings without us, what are they but the scum of this pot that boyles within us, the ebullitions of our lusts that war in our members (*f*). While there is then cor-
f Jam. 4. 1.
ruptions

ruptions in our natures, narrowness in our faculties, sleepiness in our eyes, difficulty in our profession, cunning in our enemies, ~~sorrows~~ hard things in the Scriptures, and an envious man to super-inseminate, there will still be ~~so many~~ men that will be differently minded. No instrument was ever so perfectly in tune, in which the next hand that touched it did not amend something, nor is there any judgement so strong and perspicuous, from which another will not in some thing find

g Ireneus with Victor (Euseb. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 25.) Cyprian with Stephen (ib. 7. c. 31.) Jerome with St. Austin (Aug. Ep. 8. 19.) Basil with Damasus (Basil Ep. 10. and 77. Baron. Annal. 372. 15. 25.) Chrysost. with Epiphanius (Sozomen I. 8. c. 14. 15.) Cyril with Theodore (Cyril lib. ad egyptium incep. 10. Hist. lib. 14. cap. 55.) quoted by Dr Reynolds upon Rom. 4. 19.

ground of variance. In the History of the Ancient Churches we find the greatest lights in their several Ages at variance amongst themselves (*g*). All our comfort then is that the time will come,

(but we must not look for

it while the World lasteth) when the Son of Man will cause to be gathered out of his Kingdome ~~so many~~ all things that offend, or that minister occasion of stumbling or contention, *Mat. 13. 41.* but in the mean time *finito crescere*, let both grow together unto the harvest, must have place, *ver. 30.* in this hard necessity therefore

fore, seeing for the present it cannot be hoped for, there should be such a consonancy and unity of judgement amongst all men; no, not among wise and godly men; but that in many things, and those sometimes of great importance, they may and must dissent one from another unto the worlds end, I say, in this hard necessity, that the first evil cannot be avoided, our wisedome must be to prefer the second, that where there is not perfection, yet there may be peace; good heed must be taken, least by the cunning of Satan, (who is very forward and expert to work upon such advantages) dissention of iudgements break not out into dissentions of hearts: lest by different opinions our affections be estranged, and at last quite alienated one from another. It is one thing to dissent from, another thing to be at discord with our brethren. It should be the great care of Christians, instead of desiring to find occasions of cavils to separate from their brethren, saying *I am holier than thou*, by all means, to preserve as much as in them lies, in their several places and stations, the unity of Faith and Love, by which onely we are known to be Christs Disciples. You see the Disciples

disciples of Christ, when they were waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, according to the promise of Christ, they were *ομοθύμαδι* with one accord in

b Acts 2 1. one place. (*h*) *And as if they were one*

i Act. 4.32. man, they were of one heart. (*i*) The union and accord of heart amongst Christians, is the best disposition that can be

to prepare them, to receive the Spirit of Christ ; yea , and is the best token and sign that they have received it. Indeed this is 'the new Commandment the fulfilling of the Royal Law. It is Christ's Commandment, this is my Commandment, *that you love one another* : not but that the rest are his Commandments too , but this is peculiarly, declared by his mouth, written in his blood, *Walk in love as Christ*

k Eph. 5 2. hath loved you (*k*). But this love cannot consist with those divisions and separations which some men make from their brethren, not so much out of love to truth, as out of hatred and contempt of their persons. That's the second thing to which the Apostle exhorts in the Text, in this *speaking the same things, and being of the same mind and judgement, and that there be no divisions amongst us* : It requires in case of different judgments, unanimity in heart and affections.

3. There

3. There is a third thing in the Exhortation, even uniformity in actions, this seems to be properly in the very letter of the Text, *that you all speak the same things*, for that we may do so, three things seem essentially necessary thereunto.

I. That you all submit to the same Government. For there is a necessity of Government to prevent confusion : of one Government both in Church and State to prevent division. Where there is an Anarchy or no Government, confusion must needs follow among the members. As it was in *Israel*, *When there was no King in Israel every man did that which was right in his own eyes* (l) : and where there are in one body diverse Governments, division must needs follow among the members, as it was in *Israel*, when *Jeroboam set up a faction against the House of David* *, *for the transgressions*, and consequently for the punishments thereof, *many are the Princes* thereof (n). Indeed we in this Nation need not be told the miseries of no Government, or of many Governments, or many Governors, our own experience will sure, for one Age make us dread it, and inexcusable fools, if we desire it. We have all the reason then in the World to obey the Apostles precepts

^l*Judg. 17.6*

* *I Kin. 12.*

ⁿ *Pro. 28.2.*

cepts of submitting to them, that of right are set over us : and being subject to every Ordinance of Man, for our own as well as for the Lords sake (o). And whoever speaks otherwise, inciting men to cast off this yoke from their necks : they are properly stiled children of *Belial*, their hellish design is clean contrary to the Text, to cause divisions and offences amongst you.

2. As it is necessary to prevent divisions that you submit to the same Government so that you walk by the same rule ; What is that ? It is either Principal or Subordinate. Principal, even the Law and the Testimony , the sacred Scriptures : Subordinate,even according to the Scriptures, the rules, and canons, and Customes of the Church , without a due respect to both these rules in their right placees , it is impossible Christians should speak all the same things , but there will be divisions among them. I dare assert, and think it not difficult to maintain by the Scriptures, as well as clear reason, that there is an obligation upon the members of that Church in which they were born, baptised and bred up , to submit unto, and obey the rules, and canons, and customes thereof,

thereof, if they be not able to prove them contrary to the Scriptures, or the clear light of natural reason in us, or at least such conclusions as are properly, directly, and evidently deduced from them. There is much in that argument of the Apostle to confirm the sober-minded herein. (p) If any man be contentious, we have no such ^{1 Cor, 11.} custome, neither the Churches of God: And in that of our Saviour: If the Offender will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen and a Fublican; and again, he that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. Do not think I ascribe to the Church any Popish infallibility, or call for any blind obedience unto it. O no, if any of its rules or injunctions, appears to be contrary to the Word of God, like Nebuchadnezzar's to the three Children, to fall down to his Image; or Darius his to Daniel, not to pray to any other God; or the High-Priests to the Apostles, not to speak in the name of Jesus, then must we answer with them; whether must we obey God or man, judge ye. But then we must not deny our obedience to such Church rules and canons, as repugnant to God's Word upon light surmises,

and

and slender presumptions ; this were to speak evil of the things we know not (q).
q Jude 10.
r As I take it, this is the excellent Bishop Sanderion in one of his Sermons, No worse for that. O no, (r) as in the Courts of Civil Justice, men are not ordinarily put to prove themselves honest men, but the proof lieth on their accusers part, and therefore it is sufficient for the acquitting any man. *in foro externo*, that there is nothing of moment proved against him ; it being requisite to the condemning a man that there be a clear and a full evidence against him : So in these moral trials, when enquiry is made into the lawfulness or sinfulness of our Churches rules and customes, and our Gouvernours commands, it is sufficient to warrant them, if there can be nothing produced from express Scriptures or sound reason against them ; and to condemn or disobey them upon remote consequences and weak deductions , though it be from Scripture-Texts , can ne'r be excused of rashness and unrighteousness. Sure obedience is an unquestioned duty, *obey them that have the rule over you* (faith the Apostle) for they watch for your Souls, and therefore unless it be manifest , that their Lawes and injunctions be against the Word of God, all our questions are but carpings , and needless stumbling blocks, laid in our way by

by the Troublers of *Israel*. The safest way is obedience, which also is absolutely necessary among Christians, that they may speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among them. Then,

3. More particularly still to this end, that as Christian Brethren ye may speak the same things without divisions, it is necessary that ye all joyn in the same form of prayer, praise, and manner of worshipping God. It was *David's* earnest desire, *O magnifie the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together*: And the Holy Ghost in the *Acts* mentions this Uniformity in the Churches Infancy, and time of her first love, to be one chief cause of its prospering and inlarging, *Acts 4. 24.* The multitude of Believers lifted up their voice in praises with one accord. *The people with one accord gave heed to the things that Philip spake*: And its a great part of the blessedness of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, that the Elders sing with one voice unto the Lord. So doth the Apostle make it his earnest prayer for the *Romans*, that they might be like minded one towards another, that with one mind, and with one voice, they might glorifie God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: with

one mind, and with one mouth too; while men think to glorifie God in several ways, and several forms, it is scarce intelligible, how they can do it in this desirable manner, with one mind, and with one mouth: so many several ways, so many several mouths; and that can never tend to the glory of God. The Apostles expression intimates, that like-mindedness, unanimity, and uniformity, are very subservient to the glory of God: What an honour is it to the God of *Israel*, when all *Israel* came in as one man to do him worship; when that admirable variety of Gifts and Administrations and Offices that are in his Church do not jar and clash one against another, but sustain and mutually supply out of their stores the wants each of other, and all conspire together in their several kinds to glorifie God: What else is musical harmony but concord in discourse, variety in consort? it makes the musick full and delightful, when there is a well-ordered variety of voices and instruments in it; but if all instruments were perfectly well tuned, yet if the men could not agree what to play, but one would have a nimble Galliard, another a frisking Jig, another a grave

Air;

Airs, and if all of them should be so wilful, as without yielding to the rest, to scrape on his Tune as loud as he could, what a hideous hateful noise may you imagine would such a mess of Musick be? no less odious to God, and equally grievous to every godly man it is, when such Vices as these are heard in the Church of God, *I am of Paul, and I of Cephas, and I of Apollo:* When one Pamphleteer will have the Church governed after this fashion, another after that; when one Mountebank in Religion will have this way of Worship, and form of Prayer, another that, to the great scandal of the Reformed Religion, and the manifest dishonour of God. Surely beloved, such an Uniformity, as of all Christian Members of the same Church to be of one mind, and worship God in one place, and in one way, and form, and manner, with one accord, would be the most beautiful, and comely, and happiest thing in the world. So is this Uniformity in actions of Worship also necessarily included in this Apostolical Exhortation, to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us.

Indeed this would be a perfect and bles-
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sed Unity for all these three to meet together ; unity in judgment , unanimity of loving affection , and uniformity in action , and this perfection ought to be both in all our aims and endeavours : but if while we faithfully endeavour it in our several places , we cannot (through our own weakness , or others waywardnes) attain to the full perfection hereof , yet *pulchrum erit in secundis tertiiis ve* , it will be our comfort and commendation to labour and attain so much after it as possibly we can ; and therefore *nevertheless whereunto we have attained, let us mind the same things.* Let us labour after this unity of judgment , affection , and action . I beseech you Brethren by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ , that ye all speak the same thing , and that there be no divisions amongst you , but that ye strive perfectly to be joyned together in the same mind , and in the same judgment .

To quicken you hereunto (this being so needful a duty , and we all so dull unto it) let me offer these following forceable Motives to your serious consideration .

1. The seasonableness of the Exhortation : for are not these the last and worst days , the dregs and Lees of times , of which

which our Saviour prophesied, when Christian Love should grow cold, which is the Bond of Peace ; and Satan knowing his time but short, should double his diligence in sowing his Tares of cursed contentions in Gods Fold, the proud and malicious hearts of men being too fruitful soils thereof; and of which the Apostle prophesieth, and Saint Jude. Read the places, and see if the men of this Age be not therein exactly described. Alas, when was the Christian World ever more out of quiet ? when was Gods Church ever more dangerously rent and torn ? when was Schismes and Separations ever more greedily and dangerously made and prosecuted ? when was Gods Church on Earth more Militant, or had more Enemies ? forreign, abroad, intestine, at home ? more Satanical spirits to hate it ? more *Lucians* to scoff at it ? more *Rabshakah's* to rail on it ? or *Balaam's* to curse it ? when were there more Atheists to scoff at Religion, (*Ridemur decathimmur*, saith Tert.) more Hereticks to reproach, revile, and slander it ? more Schismaticks studying divisions, affecting parties, carrying up-sides and factions, (and being out of danger of the Kings Laws , and

Heb. 10.
24, 25.
Jude v. 11.

contemning the Churches pious Edicts and Censures) like unnatural Children rending and tearing their Mothers Bowels? (*Inimici Domestici.*) Behold the Churches Foes are those of her own Family, her Sons disturb her peace, and the way thereof they will not know. Mistake me not, my design is not to rail, or reflect on any sort of men, but only to warn you as a faithful Watchman to take heed of these deceitful ways: and the very design of this Complaint and Lamentation, that there should be such Troublers of *Israel* abounding amongst us, is only to shew the Exhortation in the Text as necessary; so seasonable, even that we all hearken after the things that make for peace: to speak the same things, and to avoid (if it be possible) these divisions amongst us. So from the seasonableness, pass we

2. To the reasonableness of the Exhortation also, and that in almost infinite respects.

1. Listen to Gods Commands: search the Scriptures Brethren, and find any duty, if you can, more peremptorily commanded, more highly commended by the Holy Ghost, more frequently pressed by the

the Prophets and Apostles than this. How often doth the Gospel of Peace call upon us, to follow peace with all men, if it be possible, and as much as lyeth in us to live peaceably with all men? How much more with Brethren, men of the same Nation, and Church, and Faith, and Religion with our selves? for to such it is written, Be of one mind, live in peace, follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, and Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. It were endless to give you all the strict Commands of the Gospel to this purpose, without obedience to which we are not real but nominal servants of Jesus Christ, unless we study Unity, and be careful to maintain peace and love, and speak the same things, and avoid divisions, and those that cause them, the World may question our Christianity; which will further appear in all the following considerations: whilst we look upon God, whom we pretend to serve and worship.

2. It is the Apostles Argument amongst many others: *I the Prisoner of the Lord beseech you, that you walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called.* How? With all lowliness, and meekness, and long-

C 4 suffering,

Heb. 12. 14

2 Cor. 13.
11.

2 Cor. 13.
14.

2 Tim. 2.
23.

suffering, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: For, saith he, there is one Body, one Spirit, one Hope, one Lord, one God, and Father of all. There is but one God, and great reason then we should endeavour unity, and unanimity, and uniformity in the worship and service of this one God. Those that have several Gods, may well have several ways, and several forms to worship them; as the Marriners in *Jonah* called every one upon his God. When several Gods are afoot, all Games must go forward; but now we all profess but one God, unchangeably one, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is always of one mind, he is not for one thing sometimes, and another thing other times, like a distempered Stomach, but God is still of one and the same mind; and therefore that which pleaseth him at one time, the same words and things, if they proceed from the same heart, must needs find the same acceptance always. No marvel if dissentions arise amongst wicked ones, betwixt *Abimelech* and the men of *Shechem*, seeing they serve divers Masters, have several lusts, one reigning in this, another in that man, all commanding

manding contrary things ; but shall not Christians speak the same things without divisions, that all serve one Lord, and that one being so far from commanding any thing that may occasion discord , that his very living is the Badge and Cognizance of Love and Peace. More particularly, being we profess to worship the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, let us consider each Person in the Blessed Trinity.

1. God the Father he is one , there is one Father of all : If God be our Father, Eph.4.6. then are we all Brethren to each other. If a man coming into his Neighbours house by chance, should find them all together by the ears , would he not think them disorderly and ill-governed children ? how much more if they should be observed to be ever and anon snarling and quarrelling one with another , and beating and kicking one another . Here Joseph thought he need say no more to his Brethren to prevent their falling out by the way , than to remind them that they were all one mans Children , and Brethren to each other : And Abraham to Gen.45.24 procure an everlasting Amity , and utter cessation of all Debates, thenceforth between himself, and his Nephew Lot , and their

their Servants, made use of this one Argument, the most prevalent of all others,

Gen. 13.8.

Pla. 133 1.

that they were Brethren. *Ecce quam bonum;*

Behold how good and joyful a thing it is Brethren to dwell together in unity. Prophane *Esau* durst not avenge himself on *Jacob*, lest he should vex his

Gen. 27.4.

Father *Isaac*: And shall not Christians then who are Brethren, not only by Generation, but by Regeneration, much more tender the displeasing of their one Father, by disagreements and molestations of one another? the nearer, the dearer, we use to say, and there are few Relations nearer than that of Brotherhood, but no Brotherhood in the world so closely and surely knit together, and with so many and strong tyes, as the Fraternity of Christians in the Communion of Saints, which is the Brotherhood in the Text: And therefore as we are Brethren, and tender the glory of that God who is the Father of us all, it concerns us to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us.

2. Consider also God the Son; we are all redeemed by that one price of his precious Blood, and methinks that calls for love and unity. It's implied in that of

the

the Apostle, *One Faith*: One Faith is fixed on one and the same object, the Mercy of God, and Merits of Christ, or Gods Free Grace in Christ, and being ingrafted into one and the same Vine, should we not all bear one and the same fruit? We are all Fellow-Captives redeemed by the same Saviour, Fellow-Patients cured by the same Physician, even Jesus Christ the object of our Faith. Hence he that redeemed us did in like manner pray for us; that we may be one, perfectly one, that the world might know that God sent him: but this can never be, if we speak not the same things, but there be divisions amongst us.

3. There is also but one Spirit, and that's the Apostles Argument also: *There is one Body, one Spirit*; and therefore endeavour the unity of the Spirit. The Spirit is a Spirit of Unity: this Spirit is the very Essential Unity, Love and Love-knot of the two Persons, the Father and the Son, of God with God; yea, it was the very Union and Love-knot of the two Natures in Christ, of God and Man: he is the Spirit of Unity, and therefore cannot delight in us, unless we keep the unity of the Spirit: That Spirit, the Soul of man,

man, that gives life to the natural body, yet can it not animate and give life to members dismembered, unless they be first united and compact together. We read there of the dead and scattered bones, that to the end they might be revived, they first came together, every bone to his bone, then the sinews came and knit them, then the flesh and skin covered them; and then, and not before, the Spirit came from the four Winds to give them life. So the very natural Spirit, the Soul, doth not inform the body, unless there be an accord and unity in it: much more is this required as a proper disposition to make us meet for the habitation of the Holy Ghost, even this quality that is like that his Nature and Essence, Unity and Unanimity, for us to be of one mind and judgment, and to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us: divisions are a token we are led by divers Spirits, and not by this one. There is a Spirit indeed in these divisions, but it is an evil spirit, such as was between *Abimeleck* and the men of *Shechem*: And such as are for a toleration of such divisions, we may write upon them as our Saviour did upon the man possessed, *Legion*,

Ezek.35.
v.8,9.

Judges 9.

gion, for they are many: pretend they to the Spirit as they will, of walking and praying by the Spirit, we need not believe them, unless we list, to be led by any other than a devillish spirit. The Devil shews himself to be a Devil by his Cloven Foot: if we would receive, and not grieve, nor quench, nor dishonour the one Spirit, by which we pretend all to be governed, let us speak the same things, that there be no divisions amongst us: As we tender the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we must do this.

3. So while we look upon the Church of God, for that is but one body, which is the Apostles argument also: *It is but one, and only one. My Love, my Dove, my undefiled is one, she is the only one of her Mother.* So are we Christians made all up into σωμα, one mystical body; and that by such a real (though mysterious) incorporation, as that we become thereby ομοιοι, as all of us members of Christ, so every one of us members one of another: Nor the sympathy and supply that is between the members of the natural body, for their mutual comfort and good of the whole: The Apostle setteth it forth

Eph. 4. Cant. 6.
Rom. 12.5.

forth elegantly, and applieth it very fully
 1 Cor. 12. to the Mystical Body of the Church at large. It were a thing prodigiously unnatural, and to every mans apprehension the effect of a frenzy or madness at the least, to see the head plot against, the tongue revile, the hands buffet, the teeth devour his fellow-members. No, if any one member, be it never so small and despicable, be in anguish, the rest are sensible of it: There is a mutual sympathy and communication betwixt them; there are no terms of bitterness stood upon in the natural members, I am better than thou, and I than thou; no terms of disgrace heard, (I have no need of thee, nor I of thee) but they are all ready to contribute their several supplies according to their several measures and abilities, to give ease and relief to the grieved part, *ινα μὴ γίγησεν*.

1 Cor. 12. That there be no rent or schism, saith the 25. Apostle, using the very word of the Text, no division or disunion of parts in the body: And as we may consider the Church as one Body, so as one Household, and our selves as fellow-servants of the same Family, the same household of Faith: So ought we then to behave our selves in the House of God, which is the Church of the

Col. 3. 10.

1 Tim. 3. 15.

the Living God, as becometh fellow-servants that live under the same Master: We all wear one Livery, having all put ^{1 Cor. 10.} on Christ by solemn profession at our ho. ^{3, 4.} ly Baptism; and we are all fed at one Table, eating the same spiritual meat, and drinking the same spiritual drink in the holy Communion; and therefore all reason, that as members of the same Body, and servants of the same Family, we speak the same things, and there be no divisions amongst us. Mr. *Baxter* in his Cure of Divisions, urgeth two or three things well in this Topick of the Church, as that our union with the Church, is a sign of our proportionable union with Christ; and our separation from the Church, is a sign of our separation from Christ; nay, that union is not only an accident, but of the very Essence of the Church, without which it is no Church, and without which we can be no members of it, Unity being necessary to the very being of the Church, and of Christianity; and that our union is necessary to our nourishment from, and Communion with Christ and his Church: but I refer you for these to him, whom perhaps some will rather hear than us, if we should speak the same words. I shall amongst

See it page
65,

amongst many particulars urge only four things, with reference to the Church, that shews the need you have to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst you.

1. This is the only way to forward the work of God for the building up of the Church; which Faction and divisions on the other hand obstructeth, so as nothing more. You often read in Scripture, of edifying the Body of Christ, and of doing all things to edification. The expression is metaphorical, taken from material buildings, often used by the Apostle with application to the Church of God, and the spiritual building thereof: for the Church is the House of the Living God; and all Christian-members of this Church are as so many stones of this building, whereof the house is made up: and the bringing in unbelievers into the Church, by converting them to the Christian Faith, is as the fetching of more stones from the Quarries to be laid in the building. Now the building in it self (and that is edification) is the well and orderly joyning together of Christian men as living stones in truth and love, that they speak the same things, and that there be no divisions

Eph. 4.12.
2 Cor. 12.
19.

1 Tim. 3.
15.

sions amongst them, that they may grow together, as it were, into one entire building, to make up a strong and comely house for the Masters use and honour.

(a) Indeed there is nothing more condueth hereunto, than Peace, Love, and Concord: Knowledge is very little or nothing but a puff in comparison of Charity, in order to Edification: (b) It may swell, and look big, and make a shew, but Charity doth the deed: (c) It lays the stones together, and makes them couch close one to another, and binds them up with Fillings and Cement to make them hold. Hence that wise Master-builder S. Paul, that knew well what belongs to this work, when he speaks of compaing the Church into a building, mentions the edifying of it self in love. (d) Indeed when all the Workmen intend the main busines, each in his place and office performing their appointed task with chearfulness and good agreement, then doth the work go on, and the building gets up apace and strongly; but when one man draws one way, and another another way, one will have things done after this fashion, another after that, one mars what another makes, pulls down what

D another

^a 1 Pet. 2.9.

^b 1 Cor. 8.1

^c 1 Cor. 1.

^d Eph. 4.

15.

another sets up, how is it possible while things go thus, that ever the building should be brought to any perfection or handsomness? and therefore well doth the Apostle joyn these two together, *τὰ τὸν*

e Rom. 14. εἰρήνης καὶ τὰ τὸν ἀκοδομῆν. (e) *Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith we may edifie one another.*

Where the hearts and tongues of the builders are divided, the building will either come to nothing, or prove but a *Babel* of confusion: for where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil

f James 3. 16. work. (f) Strife will make ill work, it will build up nothing, unless it be *Babels* walls:

It is peace and concord that builds up the walls of *Jerusalem*, which as it hath its name from peace, so hath it also its perfection from peace; and then, and not before, shall *Jerusalem* be built, as a

g Psa. 122.3 City that is at unity in it self; (g) when they that build *Jerusalem* are first at unity amongst themselves, when they speak the same things, and there is no divisions amongst them.

2. As this is the way to build the Church, so it is the way to preserve it both in peace, beauty, and safety.

1. In peace. The concord of Families
is

is their peace , so is amity and concord in the Church ; whereas the divisions and discords of Christians disturbs their minds , and discomposeth the Church :

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem , (b) faith ^{b Psa. 125.} *the Psalmist ; but by different forms and ways there is a breach of that peace : such divisions in the Church are like wars and tumults in the Commonwealth , they discompose , and set it out of order . It was Sir Henry Wotton's excellent saying , *Disputandi pruritus Scabies Ecclesiae* : The Itch of Disputing doth cause the Scab of the Church . Every Sect finds some little pleasure in scratching , by zealous wranglings and disputes for their several Opinions , till the blood be ready to follow ; and at length it proves the bain of peace , and charity , and love , which is the very life and soul of Christian Religion : Now is not this , or should it not be an effectual Motive to this Unity , Unamity , and Uniformity ? How dear should be the Churches peace to every member thereof ? *Dulce nomen pacis* , the very name of peace sounds sweetly to the ear : there is such a mixture of pleasantnes and profitableness in it , as wrapt the Psalmist into admiration , *ut prius miraretur quam ostenderet* ,*

ret, headmires it himself, and rouzeth others to the like admiration: (i) *Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is, Brethren to dwell together in unity:* some things are pleasing, not good, as Epicurism and Good-fellowship; some things good, not pleasing, as Fasting and Martyrdom, but this both; for pleasure, it is like the Oyl poured out on Aaron's Head; for goodness, it is like the Dew on Hermon's Hill, which made the Valleys fruitful. So good and pleasant it is, that nothing can be pleasant without it: It is the desire of all hearts, the rest of all Nations, the end of all Contentions, *pacem te poscimus omnes*, nothing more desirable in Families, in Kingdoms, much more in the Church: And therefore lest we violate the Churches peace, it concerns us to speak the same things, lest there be no peace but divisions amongst us.

2. It is the way to preserve the Church in beauty and honour; the concord of Christians is their beauty and honour, and their divisions and discord is their deformity and shame. The Church stands upon two Staves, the Staff of Beauty, and the Staff of Bands: if the Staff of Bands be once broken, the Staff of Beauty cannot

not long stand, but by divisions our Beauty becomes deformity, Reformation deformation: as when one hand is black, and another white, one cheek pale, another red: so whilst we become several Churches, several Bodies, what do we but make a Monster of the Church, the Body of Christ! Indeed nothing more tends to the Churches dishonour, and Christs dishonour, than this: there is no such scandal to the Churches Enemies of all sorts, than this: the common Enemies of the truth of Religion, are chiefly Atheism and Superstition; and wherefore serveth the home-differences of Christians, especially about indifferent things, about Gestures, and Vestures, and other indifferent Rites and Formalities, that for such things as these, (things in their own nature indifferent, and never intended to be otherwise imposed, than as matters of circumstances and order) men should desert their Ministerial Charges, fly out of the Church as out of *Babylon*, stand at open Defiance against lawful Authority, and sharpen their tongues and pens with so much petulance and virulence as some have done; wherefore serveth this, but to the dishonour of Christians

and Christianity, and to give scandal to the Enemies thereof?

1. To the Atheist : for he, till all men be of one Religion, and agreed in every point thereof too, (which I doubt will never be whilst the World lasteth) thinketh it the best wisdom to be of none, nay, makes it his best pastime to jeer at all : The agreement of Christians is an ocular demonstration to the World , that they have a certainty of the Faith which they profess, and that it is of a healing nature, and tendeth to the felicity of the world : so that never was Christians observed to live in an undivided Unity and unfained love , but the very Infidels and ungodly round about them did reverence both them and their Religion for it ; whereas their discords and divisions give occasion to Atheists and Unbelievers to blaspheme, as if there were no certainty in their belief, or as if it were of a vexatious and destructive tendency : so that never were Christians divided, implacable, and bitter against each other, but it made them and their profession a scorn to the unbelieving and ungodly World. Their despising and vilifying one the other, teaches the wicked to despise and vilifie them all : as a well ordered

ordered Army, and a City of uniform ; and comely building is a pleasing and inviting sight to beholders , whereas a confused Rabble and ruinous heap breeds abhorrence ; even so the very sight of the concordant society of Christians, is amiable to those without ; whereas their disagreements and separations makes them odious. Hence the former conduceth much to the conversion and salvation of men , and the latter hardens men in wickedness, and hinders their coming into the Church, and their obedience to the truth, Who loveth to thrust himself into a fray ? and what wise men will joyn with drunken men that are fighting in the streets ? A more effectual way cannot be devised to drive men from Christ , than to represent Christians like a company of madmen that are tearing out the throats of one another : when one Faction flies upon, and speaks ill of one another , what wonder if the Atheist and Infidel speak ill of, and flies further from them all ? whereas contrarily, the best means to win the World to a love of Holiness, is , if they can see that holiness makes men fervent and unfeigned in the love one of another. (k) Christs words in his prayer ^{k 1 Pet. 1.} are ^{22.}

I Joho 17. are notable to this purpose:—(l) *I pray,*
^{20, 21, 22,} *faith he, for them that shall believe on me*
^{23.} *through their word, that they all may be*
one: As thou Father art in me, and I in
thee, that they also may be one in us, that
the world may believe that thou hast sent
me, &c. It plainly implies, that the Unity
 of Christians is a great means of con-
 verting the World to the Christian Faith,
 and convincing Infidels of the truth of
 Christ, as sent by God: and so on the
 contrary, their divisions must needs be a
 scandal to them. Upon which account al-
 so, we have reason to take heed, to speak
 the same things, and that there be no di-
 visions amongst us.

2. Such divisions give scandal to Pa-
 pists. You read how loth was *Abraham*
 to fall out with *Lot*, and how desirous
 he was to compound the differences that
 were between their Herdmen; and one
^{m Gen. 13.} reason is hinted, in that it is said, (m) the
^{7.} *Canaanites* and *Perizzites* dwelt at that
 time in the Land. So have we in our Land
 many *Canaanites* and *Perizzites* at this
 day, that take offence at these divisions
 of ours, and makes it a chief occasion to
 alienate their hearts from the Truth of
 God. There be many Papists and Roma-
 nists

nists confirmed and made obstinate in their Opinion of the Catholickness of the Romish Faith. Hereby , when they hear of so many things which have been ever, and are still retained in the Church of *England* in common with the Church of *Rome*, as they were transmitted both to them and us in a continued Line of Succession from our Godly and Orthodox Forefathers , who lived in the Ages next to Christ and his Apostles, to be now inveighed against , and decryed as Popish and Superstitious. And when they see men, pretenders to Piety , Purity , and Reformation, more than others, not contenting themselves with those just Exceptions that had been formerly taken by the Church of *England*, and her regular children , against some Erronious Doctrines and Forms of Worship taught and practised in the Church of *Rome*, and endeavoured to be unduly, and by her sole Authority , imposed upon other Churches , when they see them not contenting themselves with these things , but even so far transported with a spirit of contradiction, as that they care not, so as they may but run far enough from *Rome*, whether, or how far they run , although they shou'd

should run themselves (as too oft they they do) quite beyond the bounds of Truth, Allegiance, common Reason, and even common Humanity also. Besides, we know it hath been, and is one grand objection of the Papists against the Reformed Churches, that the Fanatical dissentions amongst our selves are evident signs of an Heretical spirit, as *Bellarmino*, *Stapleton*, *Kellison*, and others argue; and *Fitz Simon*, an Irish Jesuite, hath written a whole Volumn on this argument, which he calls *Britanio-Machia*. It's true how unhappy they have prov'd in this pretended Unity, which they make a note of their true Church, any one may judge that will but read the writings of Doctor *Field*, Bishop *Jewel*, and even the late Book of the Excellent Doctor *stillingfleet* upon this argument, which proves them nevertheless faulty, however we be blame-worthy: As *Gregory Nazianzen* did answer those in his time that used the same argument, *ιμεῖς δὲ οὐδὲν ἡττον αὐτοῖς νὰν οὐκέταιροιεν*; onely by this methinks we should be warn'd, if by no other consideration, to let such a spirit of peace and meekness shew it self in our lives and doctrines, *ut nihil de nobis male loqui*

Discourse
concerning the I-
dolatry
practised
in the
Church of
Rome, by
D. Edw.
Stilling-
fleet.

loqui sine mendacio possint, that they may never have advantage with the same breath to speak both truly, and reproachfully against us. And to this end, to preserve the Churches beauty and honour, and to stop the mouth of the Adversary, and take away the occasion of scandal, let us speak the same things, and let there be no divisions amongst us. I add,

3. This want of Unity, Unanimity, and Uniformity among those that keep within the pale of the Church, gives scandal to those of the Separation, such Schismaticks and Hereticks as are clean gone out, and have renounced all kind of communion with us; for they must needs think very jollily of themselves and their own singular way, when they shall find those very grounds whereon they have raised their Schism to be so stoutly pleaded for, and pursued by some that are yet content to hold a kind of communion with us: For there are many that will hold those Principles, besides which there can be nothing colourably pretended for inconformity in point of Ceremony and Church-Government, that will not yet admit of such conclusions naturally issuing thence, as will necessarily in-

See Toleration not to be abused.

forc

force an utter separation. The *Separatists* Tenents are but the *Nonconformists* Principles improved, and then it is to be feared that the *Nonconformist* gives the occasion of offence and boasting to the *Separatist*, he lays the foundation for the others division from us, and so may happily have a right in that of our Saviour,

n Mat:18.7

(n) *Offences will be, (for the tryal of the faith and patience of the Saints) but væ homini, woe to the men (without repentence) by whom the occasion of those offences comes.* In all these respects then, for the Churches honour, and to avoid that scandal that is thereby given to Atheist, Papist, and Separatist, let us speak the same things, and let there be no divisions amongst us: and as for the Churches beauty and honour, so

3. For the safety thereof; for divisions
1. Invite and encourage the Churches
Enemies.

2. They weaken them to resist them.
1. They invite and encourage the Enemy, as it is noted of the Ancient *Brittains*, their intestine contentions invited the Enemy to conquest. Nothing so much hearteneth and advantageth the Enemy abroad, as the fractions and dissentions that

we have at home : *Per discordias civiles externi attollunt animas*, said *Livy* once of old *Rome*. Whence our Countryman *Gildas* complained of old of this Island then imbroiled in wars, *fortis ad civilia bella, infirma ad retundenda hostium tela*, that by how much more her valour and strength was spent upon her self in managing of intestine and domestick broils, by so much the more she laid her self open to the outrages and incursions of forreign Enémies: *commune periculum concordia propulsandum*, saith *Tacitus*. The Chur-ches peace and concord is the Tower of *David*, from whence we may repel our Adversaries, whom else we shall by our intestine differences cause to rejoice. If all the members of the Church were but fast joyned together, saith Dr. *Reynolds*,
 † *vinculo fidei & glutine charitatis*, in the bond and cement of Faith and Love; if † In his excellent Sermon of the peace of the Church.
 Governoours, Teachers, and People, would but joyn hand in hand, the one to rule with Authority and Meekness, the other to teach with wisdom and compassion, the third to honour, both by humb~~ie~~le submis-
 sion to their judgment, and willing obe-
 dience to the guidance of their Gover-
 noours and Pastors, then would they cut
 off

off all occasion from those that seek occasion, and disappoint the expectations of those that do, *captare tempora impacata & inquieta*, would be fishing in troubled waters. The Devil (as *Optatus* speaks) is tormented with the peace of Brethren, but is quicken'd and put into hopes of success in his attempts against the Church by the mutual ruptures and jealousies, that the members thereof torment and cherish amongst themselves; as when by *Jeroboam's* defection *Judah* and *Israel* were rent asunder, then came *Shishak* and troubled *Jerusalem*: (o) and as divisions invite and incourage the Churches Enemies, so

*2 Chro.
12. 2.*

2. They weaken her to resist them. The unity of Christians is their secondary strength, saith Mr. *Baxter*; their primary strength is Christ, and the Spirit of Grace which quickneth them; and their secondary strength is their union amongst themselves. Separation from Christ depriveth men of the first, and separation one from another depriveth them of the second: evermore *vis unita fortior*; but divisions weaken the Church, and dividers are certainly the weakners and destroyers of the Church: even Satan is sensible

sensible that his Kingdom divided cannot stand , and therefore he keeps an admirable unity in the members thereof ; so that a whole Legion, consisting of many thousands of them , had but one name , one action , and one habitation in the man possessed with them : *Concordia res parve crescunt , discordia dilabuntur* ; the wall is hollow and loose where the stones stand off one from another , and couch not close : Now brotherly love and unity is it that bindeth all fast , and makes of loose heaps one entire piece . Observe the expression in the Text ; *I beseech you Brethren , saith the Apostle , that there be no divisions amongst you , but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind , and in the same judgment* . Like-mindedness , you see , is the thing that joyneth all together , and in the well joyning consisteth the strength of any structure : Whence we read of *the bond of peace* , (p) p Eph. 4.3. and *the bond of perfectness* : (q) An ex- q Col 3.14 pression of the like importance you have , (r) *That I may hear of your affairs* , saith he , *that ye stand fast in one spirit , with one mind* . Christians never stand so fast as when they are of one mind : whence there is a Greek word sometimes used in the

*f Bishop
Saun-
ders Ser-
mons, p.
270.*

the New Testament, as Bishop *Saunders* observes, (*f*) viz. *ἀνατασαία*, which is commonly translated Confusion, and sometimes Tumults; neither of which Translations are unfit for the sense; but in the Literal Notation it rather imports, a kind of unstableness or unsettledness, when a thing doth not stand fast, but shaketh and tottereth, and is in danger of falling. And this *S. Paul* opposeth to peace; *God is not the Author*, saith he, *ἀνατασαίας of confusion, but of peace*. Intimating by the very opposition, that it is mostly for want of peace that things do not stand fast, but are ready to fall into discords and confusion. *S. James* speaks out what *S. Paul* but intimateth, and tells us plainly, that this *ἀνατασαία* is the effect of discord, and that contention is the Mother of Confusion; for where envying and strife is, saith he, there is *ἀνατασαία* unconstancy, unsettledness, confusion, and every evil work. The Builders do but make ill work where the building is not like to stand, but threatneth ruine, and is ready to drop down again by that time it be well up: yet such ill work doth envying and strife ever make; it is concord and union only that maketh good work,

work, and buildesth strong. Let Jerusa-
lem be built as a City at unity in it self:
(a) and Jerusalem is like to stand the fa- ^{a Psa. 122:3}
ster and longer for it; like *Selenus* his
bundle of Sticks, *insuperabiles dum inse-
peralis*, they could not be broken, insu-
perable while inseparable; such is a
Church, a Land, a Corporation, while it is
at unity: But O how weak is it when it is
divided? like those Rods pulled asunder
out of the bundle, which the weakest
Child could snap asunder: is not this so
in all other things? An Army is stronger
than a man, a Kingdom than a Single Per-
son; a Flame burns more strongly than a
single Spark; the Waves of the Ocean
are more forceable than a single drop; a
three-fold Cord is not easily broken.
Hence weak Commonwealths seek to
strengthen themselves by Confederacies
with other Sates. Alas Brethren, many
are our spiritual and temporal Enemies,
and strong is the League of Impiety that
we are to encounter with in this world;
our most united Forces, and joyned en-
deavours, are all little enough against
them: And can a few single straglers hope
for Victory, when whole Troops of *Mo-
ab, Ammon, and Mount Seir*, are to en-

counter them? Shall Britains still retain that folly whereof Tacitus of old branded them, *dum singuli pugnant universi vincuntur*, whilst they resisted singly, they were overcome universally? being divided they were destroyed. Thus it was with the Kingdom, and thus it will be with the Church, if we do not speak the same things, but there be, and continue to be divisions amongst us. By several ways, and several forms, we make the Church a very *Babel* of Confusion, and if *Babels* confusion go before, *Babels* destruction will follow after: Dividers are certainly *Abaddons*, Destroyers, destroyers of the Church, what good soever they pretend: * As those means which best corroborate the body, and fortifie the spirits, do best cure many particular diseases, which no means would cure while Nature is debilitated; so are the Church Diseases best cured by uniting fortifying remedies, which will be encreased by a dividing way of Reformation: dividing is wounding, and uniting is the closing of the wound. It's Satans usual way to pretend to a good work, when he purposeth to destroy it; he resisteth Light as an Angel of Light; he will be a zealous Reformer,

* Mr. Baxter's cure.

Reformer, when he would hinder Reformation ; and it is Satans mark of Reformation : he doth it by dividing the Church of Christ , and teaching Christians to avoid each other ; and he destroyeth their love to one another , by pretending love to themselves , as if he would have them but to avoid sin and Church-corruptions : and in this dividing work the Devil doth as Make-bates use to do , that first goes to one man , and tell him what such an one said against him , and what a dangerous person he is ; and then go to another , and faith as much of the first to him . So the Devil zealously aggravates the faults of every party to others , that they may have odious thoughts of one another , and so as they love their Souls avoid them . So this dividing Spirit just gives such counsel to men for the preservation of their Souls ; as if a man should thus , in pre-ended kindness , counsel a man for the preservation of his health , and bodily comfort . O take heed of that Mouth , and that Belly , for it getteth nothing , but devours all that the hands do get by labour ; or cast off that hand , for it hath a crooked finger ; or that gouty foot , that it may not trouble the whole body ; or rip up those guts

which have such filthy excrements in them; is not such kindness to be suspected? * Behold the Devils wiles and stratagems, be wise, and avoid them, I beseech you; and therefore for the Churches peace, and beauty, and honour, and safety, be exhorted to labour after unity, unanimity, and uniformity, to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst you. These are the third sort of Motives while you look upon the Church of God: But

4. Though ye should have little regard either to God, or the Church of God, yet look upon your selves, even in point of wisdom, and out of self-love; it concerns Christians, every one in his place, to labour to speak the same things with other Christians, and to avoid divisions from them.

1. For your own safeties sake; for if the whole be in danger, so is every part. Hence the Marriners called upon *Jonah*, *What meanest thou, O sleeper, arise, call upon thy God;* as if they had said, if the whole Ship be lost, so will every Soul in it, and thou amongst the rest. Perhaps some may think their own safety obligeth them to be dividers, to hold up a Faction and

* Thus far
Mr. Baxter.

and Division, or at least not to meddle in their Stations towards the healing them; but to such I say as *Mordecai did to Esther*, *Think not thou alone shall escape, if thou hold thy peace*: O no, O no, deliverance may arise another way, but thou and thy Fathers house shall be destroyed; therefore if you have respect for your own safety labour for peace, and unity, and unanimity, and uniformity with your Brethren, that you speak, &c.

2. For your own peace also; for this is one way for Christians to attain a peace with God, and man, and themselves. The Apostle speaks of some (*b*) that please ^{b 1 Thes. a.} not God, but are contrary to all men: I ^{15.} think it may be said of Dividers, Authors, or Fomenters of division, they cannot please God, while they study how to be contrary to all men. I shall not need, saith Dr. *Reynolds* in his Sermon of the Peace of the Church, to load them with any other guilt than the Apostle doth, that they are not the servants of Christ: (*c*) For how can he who is without peace ^{c Rom. 14.} and love, serve or please that God who is ^{d 17.} the God of Peace; and whose Name is Love, and whose Law is Love? *Non habent Dei charitatem qui non diligunt Ecclesiae*

d Known
Place it is
lib 3. ch. 16.
de Baptism. *clesia unitatem*, saith S. Austin; (*d*) nor need I to dismiss them with a more fearful Curse than that of the Apostle too, *I would they were even cut off that troubles you.* The *Achanis*, the Troublers of *Israel*, must expect trouble and no peace from the God of *Israel*, nor can such have any peace in themselves for being given to change, they are but like Noahs Dove fluttering from place to place, having no rest for the soles of their feet, till they return to the Ark again: They are like children tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine, and even when they think themselves fixed, they most-what still have some jealousies remaining in their minds, that possibly they are deceived; so that they seldom have any rest, unless they come at last to a hardness of heart, and a stupid and benumming sensual security, crying Peace where there is no Peace; for no true peace, no true rest is to be had, till they come to this speaking the same things, without division, from their Brethren: How often do we see them like drunken men reeling to and fro, carried from this to that extreme, till they come at last to conclude in Atheism and Infidelity & whereas by being

They are
but like
Cain, as
fled from
the place
of rest, so
dwelling in
the Land
of *Nod* i.e.
of wan-
dering. *Vid.*
Dre Still-
Lingfleet's
Sherinah
in locum.

ing united, particular Christians would be strengthened in the truth, having nothing more to do, but to grow in Grace, and make Progress from degrees to degrees in Holiness, which is the very design of Christianity. Indeed

3. It concerns every one to labour after this Unity, if they do but consider that this alone will put them in a fit posture to receive the blessing of God. It is remarkable, the Psalmist (e) exhorts ^{e Psal 134.} the people, *Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which stand in the House of the Lord.* Mark, he exhorts them plurally, *Ye, and all ye, bless ye;* but in the third verse he prays to God to bless the people singularly; *The Lord bless thee out of Sion: Piures hortatur ut benedicant, ipse, uni benedicit,* saith S. Austin: He exhorts all to bless the Lord, but he blesseth all from the Lord as one man. It hints, that then God useth to bless his people, when they are at unity as one man. So Christ came to his Disciples with a blessing when they were a rowing together; (f) and to his Apostles with ^{f Mat 14.} a blessing of Peace when they were assembled together; (g) and he sent his ^{g John 20.} Holy Ghost to them when with one ac. 19.

cord they were met together: And so the Promise runs, *Where two or three is met together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* While Christians disagree in their manner of serving, and blessing, and worshipping God, God will not bless them, as He will do, if in one way, and with one mouth and heart they gloriſie their Father: if they ſpeak the ſame things, and there be no diſiſions amongt them: if he will hear the prayers of Christians when two or three are united together, how much more when ſeveral thousands? nay, not only all in a Congregation, but all in all Congregations throughout a whole Land are united, ſpeaking and asking the ſame things. In this caſe, ſure if in any, *the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force:* On the contrary, if there be diſiſions, we can never be ſo hopeful in our prayers, for these diſiſions moſt-what cauſeth alienation of affections, and ſo we cannot pray with ſuch hopes of Audience, because we cannot then lift up pure hands without wrath: the clamour of our boiling malice to each other, will out-cry our prayers; our diſſentions will make that ſweet Incenſe

cense stink in Gods Nostrils, and will turn our Prayers into Curses, if we do not speak the same things, but there be divisions amongst us.

Many more Motives I might heap up to inforce our Exhortation, especially that drawn from the many examples we have set before us; as that of God the Father, who being provoked by us, yet by all means seeks peace and union with us; hath sent his Ministers of Reconciliation to beseech us to be reconciled unto him, loadeth us with his blessings, causeth his Sun to shine, and his Rain to fall on us, and all to induce us to be at peace with himself: And can we be partakers of the Divine Nature, or Sons of our Heavenly Father, if we be not Followers of him, as dear Children, in endeavouring to be united one with another? Nay, Christ his Son did become Incarnate to unite us to God, and make our peace with God; yea, and loe, the Prince of Peace came to dwell amongst men for this end, when peace was amongst men in *Augustus's* days, when there was general quiet and union through all the World, and at his Birth the Angels proclaimed peace on Earth, good

good will towards men. O how then can we be Disciples of Christ, and not fol-
low after peace, to speak the same things,
and that there be no divisions amongit us?
yea, and this Oyl of Charity poured on
Christ the Head, did run down to the
Beard; yea, unto the skirts of all his gar-
ments; for all the Saints of God now in
heaven have gone thither in this way of
peace: *Abraham said to Lot, Let there be
no contentions amongst us, for we are Bre-
thren; Stephen prayed for his Persecu-
tors, Father, forgive them.* The Saints
were ever peace-makers, and not peace-
disturbers, or dividers: Nay, very wicked
men and Devils are sensible of the be-
nefit of this way of union one with ano-
ther; therefore did *Ephraim and Manas-
seh agree together against Judah, Herod
and Pilate, Scribes and Pharisees against
Christ:* Nay, very bruit beasts covet an
union, *sevis inter se convenit ursis:* and
shall we be more blockish than they? In
a word, God stiles himself the God of
Peace, Christ the Prince of Peace; his
Name is *Immanuel*, a Name of Peace, was
Crowned at his Baptism with a Dove, the
Emblem of Peace, being in the building
of the Church *is regans yariz a Corner-
stone,*

Stone, the place of Peace, coming into the World with a Song of Peace, and going out of the World with a Legacy of Peace. The Spirit the Bond of Peace, the Gospel the Covenant of Peace, and the word of Reconciliation, Ministers Ambassadors thereof, *Jerusalem* the type of the Church, signifies in the Hebrew Tongue the Vision of Peace; and the bliss in Heaven we all look for, is nothing else but Eternal Peace, where we shall all speak the same things without division to the glory and praise of God: If then we be Sons of the God of Peace, Servants of the Prince of Peace, Temples of the Spirit of Peace, Professors of the Gospel of Peace, if we have any Consolations in the Ministers the Ambassadors of Peace, if we be Citizens of *Jerusalem* the Vision of Peace, and hope to be gathered to our Fathers, to enjoy an eternal Sabbath of Peace; if there be in us any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, let it be our care to walk by this Rule of Peace, Unity, Unanimity, and Uniformity with our Brethren, to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us; but let us be perfectly joyned together in

the same mind, and the same judgment; and as many as walk according to this Rule, peace be upon them, and the whole *Israel of God*.

Now that you may see how Christians are to speak the same things, and how they may and must order their endeavours to avoid divisions, give me leave to close my Exhortation with sundry Directions picked out of the *Analogy of Faith*: The skilful Physician must not only discover the disease, and perswade his Patient to use all means to prevent and remedy it, but he must also direct him what remedies to use, and how to use them. The directions I shall give you, you cannot like the worse, because most of them, I confess, I have (though in a different method) out of that excellent Sermon of Doctor *Edward Reynolds* of the Peace of the Church, to which I have added some Heads, and some inlarge-ments; better I could not find, let him do it that can, such wholesome Rules being therein offered, as would compose the most turbulent spirits to some moderation, if they would walk up to them; and joyntly considered, exceedingly con-
ducing to heal the breaches of the Church of God.

Then

Then by way of caution, that you mi- Direct. 1.
stake me not, know, that though you must speak the same things, and avoid di-
visions, and labour to be of the same mind and judgment, yet this Exhortati-
on admits of a limitation, it must be on-
ly, if it be possible, and as much as lieth
in you, without any shipwrack of truth
and holiness: For howsoever Unity, U-
nanimity, and Uniformity be well plea-
sing unto God, yet is it not such an Uni-
ty as he desireth, unless it be truth and
peace together; such a peace and unity
as is according to truth and godliness in
Christ Jesus: there may be an agreement
together *in falso*, when men hold together
for the maintenance of one and the same
common errore. Such as is an agreement,
as our Learned *Davenant* (g) observes.

*Epiſt. de
pacificat.*

1. Of Hereticks, in case of Heresies,
when Adversaries speak all the same
things, to deny or deprave the Faith of
the Gospel, as *Hymenius* and *Philetus* did,
(h) who sought to overthrow mens Faith b 2 Tim. 2.
in the Resurrection. 18.

2. Of Idolaters, in case of Idolatry;
(i) if *Israeſ* play the Harlot, let not *Ju- i Hos. 4.15.
dah* transgress, for *τις συγκατάθεσις* what
agreement hath the Temple of God with k 2 Cor. 6.
Idols? (k.) 16.

3. There

3. There may be an agreement of **U-surpers**, in case of **Tyranny**, when any shall usurp and exercise Domination over the **Consciences** of men, to bring them into **bondage unto Doctrines of Errors**, and make **Articles of Faith** for all **Chur-ches** to submit unto, as the **Romish Church**, and especially as the **Tridentine Council** have done. In which case the **A-postle** had no patience to give place by subjection to them, no not for one hour.*

**Gal 2.4,5*

Neque enim quisquam nostrum Episcopum se esse Episcoporum constituit, aut Tyranno-tico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem collegas suos adegit, saith S. *Cyprian* in the **Council of Carthage**, in the case of **Re-baptization** (m). Yea, 2. There may be an agreement *in malo*, when men combine together in a **Confederacy** for the compassing of some mischievous design, as did those forty and odd that bound themselves with a **Curse to destroy Paul** (n) such as is the agreement of **Thieves, Cheats, Drunkards, Whoremongers, and Fornicators**, and **Rebels**, among themselves: such agreements as these no Christian ought to joyn with, or be of the same mind or judgment with them: The **wisdom of the Flesh**, and **cunning of the Devil**.

*m Lib. de
sentent. E
piscon. de
heretic.
rebapt.*

*n Acts 23.
12,13.*

Devil ; will bring men fast enough to those cursed agreements , without which he and his knows well enough , his Kingdom cannot stand . Gods Servants have rather evermore bent themselves by their prayers and endeavours , to dissolve the Glue , and break these Confederacies of the ungodly . *Destroy their tongues , O Lord , divide them*, was holy David's prayer (o) . And S. Paul , when he stood before the *Sanedrim* at *Jerusalem* , to take off his malicious Accusers the better , perceiving both the Judges and by-standers to be of two different Factions , some *Pharisees* who believed a Resurrection , and others *sadduces* that denied it , he did wisely to cast a bone amongst them (p) . In this case then the Rule is certain , that though we must labour for Unity , yet are we *παντούς θεάτροις* , as S. Jude speaks , (q) ^{6,7,10} ^{1 Cor 3:9} to contend earnestly for the great things of the Law and Gospel , those that are either Foundations themselves , or are most visibly and immediately adjacent and contiguous to the Foundation . Hence *Paul* and *Barnabas* had no small dissention and disputation with the false Brethren , that taught the necessity of Judaical Rites unto Salvation : (r) And *Athanasius* the Great ^{Acts 15:9}

Great would not have the Orthodox Brethren to receive τύπον εἰρήνης any Forms, or Letters, Communications, or Pacificatories, from George the Arrian Persecutor: (f) And Basil the Great (g) giveth an excellent reason of it, εἰδιδοὺς γὰρ τὴν ανάτασθα τῆς πίστεως ἀπὸ τῆς παρακούστων εὐεργέτεως τοῦ λόγου εὐηγέρτου: If once (saith he) we shake the simplicity of the Faith; and retain not that as a Rule and Measure of Inferior Differences, Disputes and Contentions will prove endless; therefore the Unity that must be laboured after, and maintained amongst Christians in the Church, must be a Christian Unity, that is, a happy Concord, in walking together in the same path of truth and godliness. The Word of Christ is the Word of Truth (h); and the Mystery of Christ is the Mystery of Godliness (i); and Christ that is the King of Salem, is the King of Righteousness also. (x): Whatsoever then is contrary to these, Truth, or Godliness, or Righteousness, cannot be acceptable unto Christ (j): The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable; and our Unity must be the Unity of the Spirit: (z) *Ea enim sola Ecclesia pax est quae Christi pax est*, saith Hilary.

Here

*s. Auct. B.
p. 136.
Cypri.
ib. 2.
1 Epiph. 325.
ad Epiph.*

2 Cor. 11.9.

*1 Tim.
3.16.*

2 Heb. 7.2.

*1 James 3.
17.*

2 Eph. 4.3.

Here are our bounds set us, our *nè plus ultra*, beyond which if we pass we transgress, and are exorbitant, *usque ad aras*: The Altar-stone is the mear stone; all Bonds of Friendship, all Offices of Neighbourhood must give way, when the Honour of God and his Truth lies at stake: we must buy the Truth, and not sell it for any temporal advantages: The Church is Militant, and must maintain Wars with Principalities, and Powers, and Spiritual Wickednesses: and Christ came to send a Sword upon Earth against all dangerous Errours of mind and manners. If peace will be had upon fair terms, or indeed upon any terms (*salvis veritate & pietate*) without impeachment of truth and piety, it ought to be embraced; but if it will not come upon harder conditions, better let it go. A man may buy Gold too dear: *Follow peace with all men, and holiness*, saith S. Paul, (a) without which no man shall see the Lord; not without which peace, but without which holiness, no man can see the Lord: for the Gender of the Pronoun is not Feminine, not *ἡ χοεῖς*, but *ἢ χαεῖς*: without peace some man may see the Lord, having faithfully endeavoured it, though he can-

not obtain it, (for that is not his fault) but without holiness (which if any man want, it is his own fault only) no man shall see the Lord: Our speaking the same things then, and being joyned together in the same mind and judgment, must have this limitation, so far forth as may stand with Christian truth and godliness. Now for positive directions: To this then joyn in the second place.

- Direc. 2.* That so the main of truth and godliness be but preserved inviolate, then must Christians, by all means, seek Unity, Unanimity, and Uniformity, to speak the same things. It's true the Heathen said truly, that *nihil minimum in Religione*, yet we know our Saviour dittinguisheth between *Mint* and *Cummin*, (b) and the great things of the Law. And the Apostolical Synod at *Jerusalem*, (c) between things necessary and unnecessairy; and S. Paul (d) between meats and drinks, and the Kingdom of God; and elsewhere between the Foundation and Superstructure. (e) Some truths there are which belong *ad fidem Catholicam*, others which only pertain *ad scientiam Theologicam*: Some are *questiones nisus*, saith *Gregory Nazianzen*, others *αγιοματα*: some are *de fide*,
- b Mat. 23.*
23.
- c Act. 25.*
28.
- d Rom. 14.*
1.
- e 1 Cor. 3.*
10, 11.

fide, others *circa fidem*, being such perillous superinducements as may bruise and wrench the foundation, others *propter fidem, in quibus salvâ fide quâ Christiani sumus, ignoratur verum*, as S. *Austin* speaks (f), in which we may err or be ignorant, believe or suspend without any hazard to the common Faith. In one word, as *Tertullian* distinguisheth of sins, so may we of opinions; some are *quotidianæ incursionis*, such as are usually incident to humane frailty, and some are *dogmata devoratoria salutis*, such as proceed from heretical pride, or blindness. Now though we must, as I said before, contend earnestly for the Faith, the Foundations themselves, (against Heresies, Idolatry, or Tyranny) or such points as are immediately adjacent to the Foundations, yet so long as there is found agreement in Fundamental Truths, and in the simplicity of the Gospel, we must deny our own wits, and silence our disputes, in matters merely notional, or Canons that have little or no necessary influence into Faith, or godly living, speaking the same things with our Brethren in those matters, rather than spend our precious hours in impertinent contentions: so as for gain of a

^f De peccato Ori-
gin. cap. 23

small truth, to shipwreck a great deal of love, and by perplexing our minds with less matters, take off our thoughts from more necessary and spiritual imployments.

It was a wise and seasonable rebuke which the *Martires* in a dangerous Tempest gave to a Philosopher, who troubled them with an impudent discourse, *καὶ μηδέποτε αὐτοῖς φίλοι τοῦ κόσμου γίγνεσθαι*; we perish whilst thou triflest: So is it sad that it can be truly said of any, that (whilst they so wrangle about such questions as gender strife, those, whose poor souls, ready happily to sink under the Tempest of Sin and Death) cry out like the Man of *Macedonia* in *S. Pauls Vision*; *Come and help us*; do for want of the plain and compendiary way of Faith, Repentance, Good Works, Spiritual Worship, and Evangelical Obedience, which should be taught them, become a prey to the envious man, who while we sleep will be sure to watch, and goes about seeking whom he may devour. O that we would be wise then, by all means to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and in nothing to give offence to the Church of God, but rather silence and smother our *domestica iudicia*, our private judgments, and singular

gular fancies and conceits, leaving all small dissensions to Elias, *quibus venerit;*
 as the Areopagites did some causes to the hundred year (g), being stiff and p^{re} & A Gell.
 remptory in none of these things against ^{p. 12. c. 7.} the quiet of Gods Church, but speaking the same things, even such things that may make men confess that God is in us of a truth. *In absoluto ac faciliter est eternitas*, saith S. Hilary excellently, God leadeth not his people unto life eternal by knots and inextricable questions, by verbal wranglings or contentions: *Curiositate opus non est*, we have no need of Curiosity, saith Tertul. Our work is to be Christians in practice, not Criticks in doubtful Disputations. We do but mistake the design of Christianity, if we fix our selves in perplexed conceits and humours; nay, we pervert it, if we raise and pursue contentions in the Church, saith Mr. Hildertham (h): This is a mark ^b Upon of ungodly and ~~graceless~~ men, such as ^{John 4.23.} serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies (i). It agrees this with S. Judes ⁱ Rom. 16. description of Seducers in his time (k): ^{17. 18.} On the contrary, every man that fears ^{k Verses 8,} God, his great care is to love God, and ^{11. 12.} keep his Commandments (l): But as for ^{11 John 5.} doubt-

doubtful things, he is of a peaceable disposition in them, he is of the number of them that are quiet in the Land (*m.*): He spends not the heat of his zeal about, for, or against doubtful Opinions, alterable Modes, Rites, and circumstances of Religion, they are things too weak to lay much weight upon them, being so little serviceable or disserviceable to the very design and frame of Christianity, further than as our humility, and obedience, and meekness, and other Christian Graces, are exercised and manifested by them: Indeed an eager defending or opposing such kind of things, is (to use the similitude of an excellent Person) like the Apes blowing at the Gloworm, which affords neither light nor heat: nay, by woful experience we find it very injurious to the very design of Christianity, as that which often hardens Atheistically disposed persons, when they observe the contentions of Christians about matters of this nature, for thereby they often take a measure of their whole Religion; and besides an eager concernedness about indifferent things, is too ordinarily accompanied with a luke-warm, or rather frozen indifferencies concerning the most important points, and the

The de-
sign of
Christianity by
M Fowler.

the Indispensables of Christianity. It is too visibly apparent to be denied (faith Mr. Fowler) that those that have such a ^{Page 242.} scalding hot Zeal either for, or against things of no certainty, and no necessity, are many of them (as their Predecessors the *Pharisees* were) in the very other Extreme, as to not a few of the weightiest matters of Religion: wherefore in these things I beseech you, so as Fundamentals of Faith and Godliness be but preserved inviolate, let us speak the same things, and let there be no divisions amongst us. To this end

3. Let our great care be an *πάνος* and *ὑπόστασις*, a joyn't obedience to the truth wherein we all agree, and pursuance of those pious ends we all profess. It's the Apostles Rule, this in the very ease; (*n*) *whereunto we have already attained*, saith he, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same things; for this we must know, that the love of God, and Conscience of his Commandments, is the right way to know him, and the secrets of his Word. *Si in Christi lumine ambulare volumus, à preceptis ejus & monitis non recedamus*; *sicut S. Cypr.* If any man will do the will of God, he shall know the Do-

* John 7.
 17.
 ¶ John 1.
 2,3,4.
 ¶ Psa. 118.
 r Lib. 6.
 1 p. 29.
 f 1 Tim. 6.
 3

Etine, saith Christ (o), Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments, saith S. John (p). Those things which we learn to do, we learn by doing, saith Aristotle. *Nisi fidelium operum usus præcesserit doctrinæ cognitio non apprehendetur*, saith S. Hilary (q). The right knowledge of Divine Truth is not only intellectual for the Brain, but experimental for the Conscience, and consisteth much in the taste of spiritual things, *Quod in cibis gustus, in sacris intellectus*, saith S. Basil. *Vide omnes parvo ingenio, literis nullis, ut bene agerent peragendo consecutos*, saith Pliny (r). Hence that expression of the Apostle, (f) Knowledge according to Godliness: They therefore that resolve to make it their daily care to keep a good Conscience, are most likely by the other helps of Learning and Industry, to find out the truths wherein Christians are apt to disagree: for the very Heathen Philosopher Aristotle could say, *κακία φρεγτική ἀχών*, wickedness putrefies the principles of the mind, and that such as are mens courses of life, such are likewise the dispositions of their minds towards practical truths: A corrupt heart usually makes a corrupt judgment. *Dum his*

his quæ volumus doctrinam coaptamus , let us not then be like Painters that can draw a Ship on a Table, but can build none for use ; such as can write a discourse of Doctrines in Papers, but not express it in our lives ; but by an unanimous obedience to the truths we know , let us dispose ourselves for the discovery of those we know not ; that's one good way to bring us to speak the same things , and to prevent divisions amongst us.

4. To this joyn't obedience in things wherein we all agree , let us add a moderation of the fervour of our zeal, against those that are contrary-minded in the things wherein we differ. There is in the nature of many men a certain *Exquorū*, an heat and activeness of spirit , which then principally, when conversant about objects Divine, and matters of Conscience, is wonderful apt , without a due corrective of wisdom and knowledge, to break forth into intemperate carriage to disturb peace, and occasion divisions. It was zeal in the Woman which persecuted S. Paul, (t) and zeal in him too, which persecuted Christ before he knew him (u). If ^{so} Devotion be blind , and not ruled by Knowledge , and if Zeal be like Quicksilver

Acts 13.

Phil. 3.6.

Acts 26.9.

silver not allayed, nor reduced to usefulness by wisdom and mature Learning, it often proves the occasion of much unquiet in the Church: Through this zeal, Truth it self is often stretched too far, and by a vehement dislike of Errour on the one side, men often run into an Er-

*Vide Ded.
Holdsworth's
Lett. 40.
P. 350.*

rour of the other, As *Dionysius Alexandrinus* being too fervent against *Sabellius* laid the grounds of *Arrianism*: And *S. Chrysostom* is observed, in zeal against the *Maniches*, to have too much extolled the Power of Nature: And *Acosta* observes of *S. Jerome*, that *ardore feriendi adversarias premit interdum socios*. So are there many who out of a hatred of the Papists, run into other extremes of Enthusiasm or Prophaneness: Yea, by this misguided zeal it is, that men do sometimes marvellously alienate the minds of one another from peace, by loading the contrary Doctrines with envious consequences, which the Consciences of the Adversaries do abhor: which course usually tend to Exacerbation, whereby Truth never gaineth so much as Charity and Peace do lose. It's true, Acrimony and sharpness of rebuke is sometimes necessary, towards men of obstinate and pernicious

pernicious minds (*y*) ; but amongst Bre-^{y Titus 1.}
thren, yea Adversaries that are not in-^{13. Gal.2.5.}
corrigible, all things ought to be carried
with lenity and meekness (*z*) ; and with ^{z Gal. 6.1.}
a mutual *συγκατάθεσις* or condescension ^{& 5. 13.}
to one anothers weaknesses (*a*).: *Sepis* ^{2 Tim. 2.}
monsus non nocet, (Epiphanius Heret. 36.) ^{15.}
vespa quò acriùs pungit minus ledit. He ^{a Rom. 15.}

observes, that there be some Creatures,
that the more they sting, the less they
hurt: And so in any dispute, that man
doth less hurt with his Argument, than
betakes himself to biting and intempe-
rate Language. In these things then we
should carry our selves, saith Doctor Rey-
nolds, *non ἀλογίως sed αδηλόπικῶς*, as Bre-
thren, not as Enemies, not to uncover
the nakedness of our Brethren. But as it
is said of Athanasius the Great, *dissen-
tibus magnis*, by his meeknes he drew
those that disented from him; so should
we (if it be possible) make the truth a
gainer by our mild handling of them that
vary from us. Christ himself did devest
himself of his Glory and Majesty, to con-
descend to our vileness, and bear with our
infirmities; so should we imitate the ex-
ample of our Master, according to that
grave advice of Nazianzen *ὑπερέπειρον ιαν-*

κένταρμα

χῆσαμεν ; let us yield to our Brethren that we may overcome them, as a Flint is easily broken upon a Pillow that yields to it.

b 1 Cor. 10. 14. (b) Let no man seek his own, but every man anothers wealth ; even as I please all men in all things, saith the Apostle , not seeking my own profit , but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Patience and condescension, so far as we can lawfully, is the true Uniter and Peace-maker

c Prov. 15. 1. (c) : The soft answer breaketh wrath, but cross and thwarting language and practise rather strengthens it : The hasty Spirit begins the fray , saith Bishop Saunderson , the patient spirit must end it, if it ever be ended, that we may all speak the same things, and that there may be no divisions amongst us. I know your Minister cannot say these things , but some will say, he is far from practising what he teacheth : but I pray be not so rash in censuring , so to hinder your selves of the benefit of these wholesome directions ; it is his care to use the Rod , and the Spirit of Meekness , both in their due places , and if he mistake through weakness, do you pity and pray for him, and do your own parts the more carefully.

5. To this end also , and to moderate
our

our zeal, according to the fourth direction, be we cloathed with Humility: Our knowledge is apt to beget Pride, and Pride is the Mother of Contention: Only by Pride cometh Contention, saith Solomon; *He that is of a proud spirit stirreth up strife (d)*. Yea, it is the Mother of Heresies, whereas Humility is the chief breeder and preserver of Unity. Hence the Apostle, when he exhorts to unity and love, he tells us first, that we must with all meekness, and holiness, and long-suffering, forbear one another, or else we can never keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (e): And when he exhorts (f), to be of one accord, and one mind, he tells us, (g) that if we would do so, we must in lowliness of mind esteem each other better than our selves: As the juice of the same Earth is sweet in the Grape, but bitter in Wormwood; as the same Odour is a refreshment to the Dove, but a Poyson to the ~~scarabæus~~ or Beetle, so the same Learning and Knowledge, qualified with Charity and Humility, is admirable useful to edifie the Church, which with pride and contempt of others is most mischievous and dangerous. Ever therefore let

us

^d Prov. 28.^{25.}^e Eph. 4:^{2,3.}^f Phil. 2.2.^g Verse 8.

us be careful to correct and keep down the rising of our knowledge by humility, not censuring or despising one another. Pride made the *Donatists* to forsake the Catholick Unity, which S. *Cyprian* (in the same judgment, but with more humility) did not disturb. Humility in weak ones would make them docile and tractable, if they were but sensible of their own blindness in the things of God, they would lay aside their private conceits, and not rack the Scriptures, to say something for them (as *Demosthenes* said of the Oracle, that it did *πατερίτην*) but they would then resign up their judgments to the light of Gods Word, and clear Reason, and when their errors are discovered, hold their peace. And humility in strong ones would make them far from censoring their Brethren, would put them in the form of servants, and cloath them with *φιλαδελφία*, Brotherly Love, which is *magnus persuadendi artifex*, a very great means to work on others judgments, to take off all such impediments as usually rise from personal prejudices in the disquisition of truth. When *Benhadad's* servants observed the word (Brother) to come out of *Ahab's* mouth,

mouth, they hastily laid hold on it, as an excellent preparation to settle those differences which were betwixt those two Princes (*b*). It was a good temper in ^{1 Kings} *Calvin*, who professed, that though ^{20, 33.} *Luther* should call him Devil, (for he knew his heat) yet would he still acknowledge him for an excellent Servant of God. O that there were the same affections in us! Had we this humility, it would make the one condescend to the others weakness, and the other willing to learn any (though unwelcom) Truth, and unlearn any (though darling) error, it would make them obey with duty what they are not able with reason to gainsay; and so we should doubtless speak the same things, and there would be no divisions amongst us.

6. As to this end we must moderate the fervour of our zeal with patience, and mutual condescensions, and humility, so must we ever set our zeal upon the right object, even upon our selves. Censurousness of others, is a chief cause of divisions and differences amongst us. It was this that S. Paul discerned in the *Romans* (*i*), the weak were censorious of ^{i Rom. 15,} the strong, and the strong disdained the weak;

weak ; but neither of both did look into the other end of the Wallet , to examine thoroughly their own spirits . We used to say , if every one would mend one , all would be well : I , but there are many ready to mend , not only one , but ten , a thousand , all about them : Every one would be mending one , but not the right one ; his Brother , but not himself . O the falsehoods and hypocrisy of mens hearts blinded with self-love ! Thus doth it fill the world with divisions and offences : The disease is hypocrisy , as the Great Physician shews (i) ; the symptoms are to be Cat-eyed outward in readily espying some thing in a Brothers eye , even the smallest Moat , and to be Bat-eyed inward , in not perceiving a Beam in a mans own eye . And a third symptom is to be tampering with a Brothers eyes , and offering his service , to help him out with a Moat there , before he think a thought of doing any thing towards the clearing of his own eyes . The remedy is to begin at home ; if we put things in their right order , the business is done ; *tu conversus confirma fratres* , strengthen thy Brethren what thou canst : Is is a good office , and must not be neglected , but something more needful is first

first to be done, that thou mayest do that much better, be converted thy self first, be reformed first, ~~the diaabilitie~~, (k) then & Luke 5. shall thou see clearly to remove the Moat⁴². out of thy Brothers eye; be sure first thy self be converted, and then in Gods Name deal with thy weak Brother as thou seest cause, and strengthen him. O that those would consider this that are so forward to censure others, especially their Superiours! Magistrates and Ministers actions, ever and anon complaining, how ill things are carried by them, and yet never take notice of their own sins, frauds, oppressions, sacrileges, and insolencies, or pievishness, and other enormities. Let such turn their eyes homewards otherwhiles, observe how their own pulses beat, and go learn what that is. Thou Hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye. Believe it, we shall never grow to Christian unanimity in any tolerable measure, whilst this censorious spirit reigns in us, and while we do not chiefly employ our care and endeavour in reforming our selves. This, I think, well practised, would conduce much to this speaking the same things, and the healing of divisions amongst us. So would it,

If we would keep our selves in our own Stationis, and labour to do God service in the Places and Callings wherein he hath ~~set us~~, and not ~~appropriatione~~ busie our selves in other mens matters, which, as the Apostle speaks, are ~~utterly~~ unsuitable to us, and without our measure.

1 Cor. 10. 13, 14. By this one thing hath the Church of Rome caused a great Schism in the Christian World, because she doth ~~so farre~~ stretch her self above her measure, and not content her self with that degree which belongeth to her. It is excellent counseyl of Solomon, not only in a case he there put, but in divers others:

m Eccl. 10. 4. If the Spirit of the Ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place. *E sede isto*, may with a little heat turn into *sed istio*, saith Doctor Reynolds. *Quidam in corpore Christi oculi quidam manus*, saith S. Basil: All are not eyes and hands in the Body of Christ, to take upon them the burden of great affairs. Are all Apostles, saith S. Paul? are all Prophets? are all Teachers? hath not God dealt to every man a several measure? hath he not placed every man in a several order? have we not all work to do in our own places? must we needs rush into the labours, and intrude

intrude our selves into the busines of other men? *Hec magistro relinquat Aristotelei, canere ipse docet.* It was a sharp rebuke of *Tully* against *Aristoxenus* the Musitian, who would needs turn Philosopher: whereunto agreeeth the Answer of *Basil* the Great to the Clerk of the Emperours Kitchin, when he jeered him for his soundness against the Arrian Faction, *οὐν δὲ ταῦτα ποιῶν καρκίνας ὀφελίσειν.* Your business, it is to look to the seasoning of your Broth, and not to revile the Doctrine or Doctrines of the Church. All these do commend the Apostles Exhortation unto you, let every one study to be quiet, to do his own business. * The Connexion more ^{* 1 Thes.} than intimates, the next way to be quiet ^{4.11.} abroad, is to be busie at home: We shall never learn well to be quiet, unless we learn also to keep our own busines. The excellent Bishop *Lany* hath fully discovered, how guilty of the contrary here-of are both the Pope, the Covenanter, and Sectary, in his Sermon on this Text, *Qui-
etness is the natural and genuine effect of
orderly keeping in our Callings, and Stati-
ons, and our own busines.* For all discord must be between two, either persons, or parties; and that which commonly kin-

*See Dott.
Lany, Bi-
shop of E-
ly, upon
this Text.*

dles the Fire is envy, or some supposed injury. Now he that minds his own business only, can give no occasion to others, of either envy or complaint; and so in recompence of keeping to his own business, he shall sit quietly under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree. Let none of us then out of ambition, discontent, emulation, or any other Polipragmatical distemper, grow weary of our own imployments, and interpose ourselves in things that are without, and above our order: But according to the

^p 1 Cor. 7. 24. Apostles rule, (n) Let every one abide in his calling, and keep the station wherein God hath set him, and this will be an excellent help to our speaking the same things, our unity, unanimity, and uniformity, and that there be no divisions amonst us.

8. To this add also: Remember that *σωρευτην* injoyned by the Apostle (o),
^{cm} 12. be wise unto sobriety. When you are to deal with things divine, set bounds to your selves, that you break not through to gaze (p): think not to draw every thing in Religion to the rule of your own crooked presumptuous Reason, to give a *quoniam* of every thing in Faith! Upon
^p Exod. 12. 21. this

this account it is that S. Paul charges the *Colossians* (q), to take heed of Philosophy, and vain deceits; not but that there is admirable use of sound Philosophy, and of Reason raised and rectified, so long as it is subordinate to Faith: but when Reason shall be so proud as to judge of Faith it self, and admit or reject it, as it shall be consonant or disagreeing to her prejudice, this is a Tyranny which will quickly overthrow all: Other cause than this there hath been none of the desperate Heresies wherewith the *scicinians* have pestered the World, but that they will have all truths to stand or fall at the Tribunal of their presumptuous Reason. Happy we, and the Church of God, if all curious Novelties in sacred things be esteemed prophane: Modesty becomes Christians, especially *cum de Deo agitur*; as *Seneca* said; be we wise to sobriety: This would confer much to our speaking the same things, and to take away divisions from amongst us; and of this advice the two next will be a full explication and improvement. So let that be the

9. Ἀναρογία πίστεως, keep your selves, Rom. 12: close to the form of sound words (r). ⁶ 2 Tim 1.

Those words and Doctrines which accord best with the grounds of Faith and love in Christ, those which ascribe most glory to God, and the Grace of God, and which most conduce to the humbling and abasing of the pride of man, which most tends to the practice of godliness, to the purifying of Conscience, and edifying of the Body of Christ. It is a weighty saying of S. Austin (*f*), *Non parum inter est ad Christianam pietatem quibus vocibus utamur*: It is of no little moment to Christian Piety what words we use; they must be according to godliness (*t*), and our knowledge, the knowledge of the truth according to godliness. To which add

10. Συνέσθα, Be sure to retain and bear reverence to the customs of the Church of God: *Contra fundatissimum morem nemō sentiat* (*n*): Let no man be in love with his private sentiments, contrary to the Churches well-grounded Customs. *Nemo nobis molestias exhibeat sic enim sentit ac docet Sancta Dei Ecclesia ab origine.* Epiphanius, *in Anchorat.* Let no man trouble us in these things, for thus the Holy Church thought and taught from the beginning. *In quibus nihil certi statuit Scriptura*

*f De Civ.
Dei lib. 10.
c. 23.*

*1 Tim. 6.
3.*

*¶ Aust. ep.
28.*

*tura mos populi Dei & instituta majorum
prolege tenenda sunt;* saith ~~Saint~~<sup>*A known
place.</sup> *Wherethe Word of God determines no
certainty, and where there is no express
and evident variation from Divine Au-
thority, there must be the Customs and
received practices of the Ancient and pure
Ages of the Church, and Constitutions of
her Pastors, be retained as a Law, and to
contemn and oppugn them, he some-
where calls it *insolentissima insania*, a
most proud or insolent madness; only this
Rule must be qualified with this necessary
limitation, that no Authority hath any
Authority in matters of Faith, Worship,
or Doctrine of Religion, to prescribe or
deliver any thing, as in it self, and imme-
diately obligatory to Conscience, which
is either contradicted or omitted in the
Word of God; for that we believe to be
fully sufficient to make the man of God
perfect, and thoroughly furnished to e-
very good work (x); but as for matters
accetlary, of indifference, order, decency,^{1 Cor. 15, 17.}
and inferior nature, and in matters of
testimony to the truths of Scripture, and
for manifesting the succession, flourishing,
and harmony of Doctrine; through all A-
ges of the Church, the godly Learned*

Vide *Litter's Reformed Presbyterian Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*,
Mr. Baxter's Disputation with several other Authors,

+ Cal. Inst. lib. 1. cap. 10. Sect. 30.

y Job 8.8.

z Jer 6.16.

a Mat. 19.8

b 1 Cor. 11.16.

hath ascribed much to the Authority and usage of the Ancient Churches, the Study of the Doctrine whereof, the Learned *Usher* calls a Noble Study: And that the Church both have had a constant use of such Customs, and right to make and impose them, I could largely shew, by the judgment of all Reformed Divines, Ancient and Modern; *Beza, Bucer, Zwinglius, Chrimenitius, P. Martyn, and Calvin* himself saith, that such Customs as serve for the furtherance of Devotion, are not purely Humane, but Divine: * Sure I am, that we should retain and observe them, seems to be enjoyned by Scriptures.

Inquire of the former time, saith *Bildad*, and prepare thy self to the search of their

Fathers (*y*). Look the old way, saith

the Prophet (*z*). It was not so from the

beginning, saith our Saviour (*a*). And

what a high valuation *S. Paul* sets upon the Customs of the Church, appears by his arguing (*b*): If any man seems to be contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God: He is there reproving the *Corinthians* Innovation of Women praying uncovered, and men covered. This ill fashion *S. Paul* confuteth with several reasons, drawn from the

power

power of Man over his Wife , appealing also to natural decency therein ; and at last concludes with this close , that they could alledge no such Custom in Gods Churches , and to run counter to the Universal practice of Christianity , is a note of contentiousness , if any man seem , &c . Now if a Church-Custom carried weight with it in S. Paul's time , when among Christians , it could not be of above forty years standing , what a Reverence is due then to those Customs that are continued in Gods Church ever since it was gathered ; which are like *Melchisedecks* (c) , without Father , without Mother , ^{c Heb. 7.3.} or without dissent , whose first original cannot be found out ? which began at the first , or near the first , and so should in all reason , and good manners , be continued till the last coming of our Saviour .

* The great Objection I know is , that these Customs and Ceremonies injoyned , are an impeachment of our Christian Liberty ; but methinks to scruple at them , and hazard the Churches Peace , and our Superiours displeasure for them , should page 56 . rather impeach our Liberty indeed , especially considering that they are not urged as obligatory to Conscience , *per se* , in them .

* See this
well an-
swered in
Dr. Edw.
Stilling-
fleet's Ire-
nicum ,

themselves, but only as they are imposed by Lawful Authority, for Orders sake. And whatever such are commended by the Churches Customs, or our Superiors Commands, or convenient circumstances, our Christian Liberty consists in this, that we have leave to do them; and our refusing to comply with these, can hardly proceed from anything better, than a proud affectation of singularity, or at best a superstitious scrupulosity in us. Sure I am the Apostle implicitly brands it with contention; and therefore to submit to them, and retain and observe them, it is an excellent way to this speaking the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us.

III. To this end also I exhort you to an ἀνεγενθαντία, a not having the Faith of God with respect of persons (*d*): Take heed of partiality, or making yourselves the servants of men (*e*), an enthralling your judgments to the fancies of any Sect or Party, but rather cast to bear an equal affection to Truth and Piety by whomsoever it be professed; for Truth and Piety is Gods, wheresoever it grows, as a Mine of Gold or Silver is the Princes, in whose ground soever it be disco-

a James

a 1.

c 1 Cor. 7.
23.

discovered: ἐπροσώπως χειρισθόμενος ἀλλὰ τί-
συχαρακτηρέσται. The contrary to this is
as great an occasion of divisions as any I
know of. It was S. Austin's complaint of
the *Donatists* in his time: if one came a-
mongst them, and assured them of his Re-
ligion, *Christianus sum*; that he was Bap-
tized, *fidelis sum*; that he lived in the
Churches Peace, *Catholicus sum*: *Christia-*
nus, *fidelis*, *Catholicus*, all would not
serve the turn to be imbraced by them:
an Unity with Christians in his Catholic
Church would not do it, he must hold
of another head, or else be no Saint: *Do-*
natus his Ear-mark must be set upon him,
or he be rejected. It is the very case this
of the dividers of this Age; be a man
never so good a Christian, never so pious
or peaceable, damned he is, to hell he must
go, if he joyn not himself to a Side: and
Faction, which by many is nick-named
their Friends, their Brethren (by way of
appropriation) the Godly, the Kingdom
of Christ, and the like. Every one is
partial to his own side he takes to, be-
yond all reason, ready to justifie them in
their most suspitious Enterprizes, and to
extenuate their most palpable excesses;
and as ready to misconstrue the most ju-
stifiable

stifiable actions of the adverse part ; yea, to aggravate to the utmost their most pardonable and smallest aberations ; what is this but at once to justifie the Guilty, and condemn the Innocent ? either of which alone is an abomination unto the

f Pro. 17. Lord (f). Hitherto appertains that which
15. the Apostle calls , having mens persons in

e Jude 16. admiration (g) : for there be many that have such a high Opinion of some men, that they are apt to receive whatsoever they deliver as the undoubted Oracles of God , though perhaps wanting both probability and proof : And on the other side , they have such a prejudice against some others , though perhaps of better worth, greater Learning, and more real Piety, and sounder judgment , as to suspect and disgust every thing that comes from them , (especially if it doth not *sapere ad pallatum*) let them lay down their Doctrine never so clearly, or prove it never so substantially. Thus partial affections to a Side, or to a Party, corrupts the judgments of men, and inclines them very naturally to divisions : And so long as men are thus carried away with such partialities and prejudice , they shall never rightly perform their duties either to

God

God or man. Now, I beseech you Brethren, let us otherwise learn Christ, let us content our selves with Christs Livity, and as such hear his Voice. We have our Faith and Appellation from Christ, not from any other person; let us not upon any these undue respects to any party of men, hold or let go Truth, or Piety, or Unity, and so make Merchandise of it; contrary to that of *Solomon*.

(b) *Buy the Truth, and sell it not.* The ^{b Pro. 28.} Orthodox Believers in the Primitive ^{23.}

Church, did ever keep themselves to the stile of *Antioch* Christians, refusing the Name of *Petriani* or *Pauliani*, or *Pais Donati*, I am of *Paul*, or I of *Peter*, or I of *Donatus*: thus let us do, let us lay aside all dividing names and affections to any party, for those do naturally hinder us from speaking the same things, and do uphold divisions amongst us: Therefore laying aside all such partiality,

12. Let us all joyn our forces unanimously against the Common Adversary: Just as *David* did, when his Brethren the *Jews* had provoked him much, yet could not he be stirred up to fight against them, but used all his skill and force against the *Philistines* (*i*). It is promised as a blessed

^{i 1 Sam.}
fruit ^{17.7, 12.}

fruit of the Gospel , which every godly man prayeth for, and desireth to see, that *the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lye down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the young Lyon, and the Fatling be together, and a little Child shall*

lead them (h): That Ephraim and Judah shall cease to annoy and vex one another,
6.
1 Verse 13. (l) but all should fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines, and spoil them of the East.

O that we could see this day, that we could lay aside our civil enmities to joyn together against our common Adversaries; this would be an happiness upon earth, almost heavenly , if we could so speak the same things , that there were no divisions amongst us.

or 13. To this end let us follow peace joyantly , and the things that make for mutual peace and unity ; Let each of us, in our several places, not only have pious affections thereunto , but also put to all our skill and wisdom , and cast about for the most proper and seasonable means conducing to so good an end. *Si uera pacis. It is not enough for every one of us to accept it, or desire it, or meet it half way, or let it in, or welcom it when it comes, but we must prosecute, pursue, and go after it:*

We

We must venture ourselves for it to *se forte*, & *quantum in nobis*, if by any means we may overtake and apprehend it. Let peace and unity be our rule, not intangling our Consciences by scruples where we need not, taking the way that leads to the Land of Peace and Promise, not by Mount *Ebal*, by pride, and malice, and ambition, and Schismatical contentions, but by Mount *Cerizim*, by humility, and charity, and meekness, and unanimity, and piety. Thus let us do that we may all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among us. *1 Cor. 1:10* Yet when all those Rules are observed, except the Lord build the House, they labour but in vain that build it. *Paul* may plant, and *Apollo* may water, but his blessing is it which maketh perfect all. By all these convincing reasons and insinuations, we can but work upon your outward senses, and by the sense represent fit motives to your understandings. It is God only that can bow and frame your hearts to peace and unity, we may persuade to unify, unanimity, and uniformity, and some of you may wish it, but if the God of Peace do not set in with us, it will not take effect. *Nun persuaderis nisi ambi*

am si persuaseris; It is God that shall per-
suade *Japhet* to dwell in the House of
Shem (*m*) ; Noah's persuasions will not
do it, nor *Shem's*, though they should
speak with the tongues of men and An-
gels : Let God persuade *Japhet*, and *Jap-
het* will be persuaded ; God is a Lover
of Concord, and the Author of Peace.
Alas, without him, what can be expected
from us, whose disposition, by reason of
that pride that aboundeth in us, are na-
turally turbulent and self-willed. The
heart of man is a four piecee of Clay, won-
drous stubborn and cherlisch, not to be
wrought upon but by an Almighty Pow-
er. What man is able to take down his
own pride sufficiently ? (many a good
man have more ado with this one Viper,
than with all other his corruptions be-
sides;) but how much less is any man a-
ble to subdue and beat down the pride of
another mans spirit ? only God, with the
strength of his Arm, is able to throw
down every exalting thought, and to lay
the highest Mountains level with the low-
est Flats. It is he alone that can infuse a
spirit into us, that will eat out, by de-
grees, that canker'd proud flesh, that
breedeth all vexations and contentions :

He

He can subdue that self-love that is in every mans bosom, and make us so vile in our own eyes, that whereas we are naturally prone to esteem better of our selves than of all other men, we shall, through lowliness of mind, esteem every other man better than our selves (n). In vain ^{Phil. 2.3.} shall we Wrestle with our own corruptions, though we put to all our strength, and wrestle with great wrestlings; as *Jacob* said upon the birth of *Neptahli* (o), ^{Gen. 30.8.} so long as we wrestle with them only. We must therefore to the use of all other means, a joyn't obedience to agreed truths, moderation of zeal wherein we differ, humility, reflecting our censures and zeal upon our selves chiefly, keeping within our Callings; sobriety, closenes to the form of sound words, and the Churches Customs; impartiality, uniting against the common Adversary, and following peace by all means. To them all we must add our wrestlings with the Almighty (as *Jacob* did) by our importunate and unceasant prayers, for this blessing of Peace and Unity. Pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*, that he would repair the breaches, and build up the walls thereof; that he would give his Word of Peace a.

free passage into the heads and hearts, into the consciences and conversations of all his people; that so we all speaking the same things, without divisions amongst us, may grow up together unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; which the Lord grant for the merits and mercies of his beloved Son Jesus Christ the Righteous, to whom with the Father and the Blessed Spirit, three Persons, and one Immortal and only wise God, be all Glory, Praise, and Thanksgiving, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

THE
OBLIGATION
 OF
CONSCIENCE
 Not to forsake
PUBLICK ASSEMBLIES.

Hebrewes. 10. 25.

Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is.

Before I close with my Text, give me leave to shew you in a few words, what great reasons I have to make choice of it, for the subject of my present discourse. These are three, My duty, Your necessity, and all Our comfort.

I. My duty in respect of the Church of God, as a Member, but especially as a Minister thereof. As a Member, for it is every Christians duty, to inform himself by the best meanes he can, how it fareth with the Church of God, but especially

to take notice of, and be affected with the State of that particular Church, whereof he is an immediate member. Men are most what too inquisitive of news, behold this is the news we should inquire after. When Gods people were in battel against the Philistines, and had the Ark of God with them in the Camp, it is said (*a*) that old *Eli*, sate upon a seat in the way side watching and hearkning, how Gods people sped : and the reason is given for *his heart trembled, for the Ark of God,* therefore he sate watching, that he might hear what became of it. So when there came one to *David* out of the Camp of *Israel* (*b*) *David* was very inquisitive how it fared with the Lords host : *How went the matter* (saith he) *I pray thee tell me.*

b 2 Sam 1. *3.4.* *c Neh. 1.2.* The like you see in *Nehemiah*, (*c*) so soon as *Hanani* came to him, the first question he asked him, was concerning the state of Gods people that dwelt at *Jerusalem*, though he wanted nothing himself being a Courtier in great place and favour, with that mighty King, yet could he not but inquire of, and be affected with the state of Gods people. Nay *Moses* being in the height of honour in *Pharoahs* Court did not onely inquire, but went out to his brethren

brethren and looked on their burdens (*d*), ^{d Exodus,}
All these examples teach us that it is our
duty, as to inform our selves about, so
to consider the burdens of Gods Church,
and be affected with the miseries thereof,
and every one in our several places, to
have a care of the cause of Religion in the
world, and especially we ought continually
to importune the Lord in behalf thereof,
and never forget it in our prayers to
God. Ye that have escaped the sword (*e*) ^{e Jeremiah}
Stand not still remember; the Lord afar off, ^{51. 50.}
and let Jerusalem come into your mind.

Ye that are the Lords remembrancers, saith
the Prophet *Esay* (*f*) *keep not silence and f Isaia. 62.*
give him no rest, till he establish, and till ^{67.}
he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
Jerusalem is like to become a reproach, an
abasing to the world more and more, if
things go on as they do, but we there-
fore that are the Lords Solicitors and Re-
membrancers, (as all the Faithful are)
should (like the importunate Widdow in
the Gospel) give him no rest, till he have
established and settled his Church in truth
and peace, and so give them beauty and
glory, even in the sight of their enemies, so
did *Nebemiah* (*g*) *he sate down and wept g Nehe. 14.*
and mourned certain dayes, and fasted and
prayed

prayed for the Churches miseries, by this means he had wonderful success in his suite to the King in their behalf. So might we the poorest and meanest of us all, help Gods Chūrch very much, and prevail with God and against her enemies, if we would so cry, and weep, and pray before God for her. (b) When *Moses* held up his hands *Israel* prevailed, and when he let his hands fall, *Amalek* prevailed, Alas! our hearts and hands are heavy in prayer and therefore doth *Amalek* prevail so much as he doth, and *Israel* receiveth so many foiles, and is afflicted with so many succeſſions of miseries. Such is the duty then of every Christian, much more it is of every Minister of the Church, as to inform himself about, and to be affected with, so unceſſantly to pray for it, yea and to prayer to joyn all his indeavours to rebuke and oppose all the enemies thereof, secret or open, whether they be without or within the Church: it is no standing a neuter in the holy wars of Gods people. He that is not with the Church to assist her, to the utmost of his power, is against it. *Meroz* is to be cursed that will not come out to the help of the Lord and his servants against the mighty.

The

Exodus.
37. 11.

The zeal of Gods servants was alwayes ^b Judges 5.
 stirring and active to stop any Schismaticks ^{23.}
 or Hereticks that did in any Age rise up
 in and against the Church of God. When
 in the Church of *Corinth*, there did but
 spring up a contention about so mean a
 ceremony as covering and uncovering their
 heads in prayer, (a very inconsiderable
 ceremony in comparison) yet he that was e-
 ven ready to become all things to all men, that
 by all means he might win some, did then
 bestir himself by all means to oppose them
 in their presumptuous violations of the
 customes and orders established in their
 Churches, though it was but in and about
 indifferent things (*i*) such is the duty then ^{16,}
 of every Christian, member, much more of
 every Minister of the Church of God, and
 so is it my duty in particular as to take
 notice of and pray against, so as much
 as lieth in me to oppose all the Church e-
 nemies and that's one reason why I choose
 this text, *Not forsaking*, &c. And as my
 duty ingageth me to this choice, so,

2. Your necessity, for there is none of you
 all, but you have great need to be well
 grounded in matters of the Churches Peace,
 and Unity, as well as, in any other points
 of Religion, else will you be in continual
 danger

danger of being seduced, and so falling from your Baptism and Christian Profession; either on the right hand or on the left. For there are abundance of false Prophets gone out into the world, never was Satan more let loose; never was there greater Swarms of Locusts issuing out of the bottomless pit, never was the Church more pestered with Schismes and Heresies; never was there more broachers and fomentors of them; and these as they are most diligent, lying in wait to deceive, they'll Compass sea and land to gather proselytes, so have they all necessary artifices and tricks of subtlety in order to that end

& Col. 2:4, they have *παραποτησιας* (k) enticing words to beguile poor souls, and *κυβελω παρεγγελιας* *μεθοδος* (l) Slight and cunning craftiness whereby *they lie in wait to deceive*; they have a great deal of cunning even such as cheats and eoggers at dice do use, much craft to beguile and circumvent them that they deal with, there is no safety in giving them the least audience, or having any thing to do with them, for these seducers (as our experience teacheth us, and Gods spirit hath often admonished us.) have a notable veine of persuading, being able to use many reasons that at first sight, carry in them

Eph. 4:14.

them great probability, and shew of truth: hence it is that many there be who have at first wondered at the gross absurdities in a contrary Religion, and have thought them such as might be answered by any simple man, and so have scorned and abhorred them, that yet by being over confident of themselves, and careless in entertaining familiarity with those Seducers, have quickly been over born and fallen into the pit of damnable errors, such need there is Beloved, for every one to ground themselves carefully in the knowledg of the truth, as that they may not be so easily turned out of the right way, but may make straight paths for their feet, that they may go steadily and strongly in it, (m) Alas ^{m Heb. 12.}_{13.} they that are Children in understanding and wavering, they are easily carryed away with every wind of vain Doctrine (n), and ^{n Ephes. 4.}_{14.} the most pernicious and damnable seducers, do easily prevail with simple women, that are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, (o) they ^{o 2 Tim. 3.}_{6,7.} daily beguile unstable souls, (p) So great is ^{p 2 Peter.}_{2. 14:} your need then to be rightly informed in the knowledg of the truth, and to be well grounded in your religion, least you be unaware seduced to error and destrucci-

Self-confidence sel-dom stands firmly in a day of tryal witness Peter at Chrs. its apprehension-

on, and that's another reason of my choosing the Text, *Not forsaking. &c.*

3. Another reason, it is in order to all our joy and comfort, for the fullness of our Church Assemblies, and if men could be dissuaded from forsaking them, it could not but be matter of great joy and comfort to every truely pious heart. Such a one cannot but rejoice in the frequency and fullnes of the publick Assemblies of the Church, and in the Prosperity of the true Religion, and right worship of God.

q 1 Chr. 15. How marvellously did Gods people rejoice, in the dayes of *David*, when the Ark of God was brought to *Jerusalem* (*q*). And in
28. the dayes of *Hezekiah* when the sacrament had been celebrated according to its first institution, which it had not been of a long time before (*r*), So when *Nehemiah* had purged the house and worship of God from the corruptions thereof, and restored

s Neh. 12. it to its primitive purity, It is said (*s*) the
V.43. people rejoiced with great joy, their wives also and their children rejoiced, so that the

t Ezra 3. joy of Jerusalem was heard even a far off. And in *Ezra*, (*t*) all Gods people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house was laid. so *David* to aggravate the misery of his pre-

tent

sent estate (*v*) he speaks of the joy and ^{v Psal 42.} comfort, he formerly took in going to ^{4.} the house of God with a multitude of them that kept holy day. And in that great joy the people of God had at the celebration of the passover in *Hezekiah's* time. This is expressed for one cause thereof, that the number of the communicants was so great (*w*) *for there Assembled to Jerusalem much people, to keepe the passover a very* ^{w 2 Chro 30. 26.} *great congregation.* On the other side the faithful and truely pious have ever grieved to hear or see that the Assemblies of the Church are unfrequented or neglected, or that any false or Schismatical worship, or congregations were set up in stead thereof. Old *Eli* was much more afflicted for takeing a way of Gods aike then for the slaughter of the people, or for the death ~~of~~ ^x his own two Sons *Hophni* and *Phinehas* (*x*), in like manner, the Holy Ghost ^{x 1 Sam 4.} noteth of his daughter in law, that being ^{17.} in extremities of her pain and anguish, it would never out of her mouth while breath was in her body, *that the glory was departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken away* (*y*), so was it this ^{y 1 Sam 4.} that troubled that zealous man of God ^{22.} *Elijah*, and made him weary of his life (*z*),

^{1 Kings 19.} The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, saith he (that is, they are fallen from thy holy Religion) they have thrown down thy holy altars, (that is, they have abolished, and shewn, contempt and hatred to thy holy worship) and why should I then desire to live any longer in such a time ? And for the Eclipse of Church Assemblies, we have a notable expetition (a) I will gather them saith the Lord that are sorrowful for solemnne Assemblies, who are of thee to whom the reproach of it was a burden : in which Text we may observe five things.

^{b Zec 1. 8.} 1. That it was one of the greatest sorowes of Gods people, in their captivite, that they then wanted their solemnne Assemblies ; doubtless they might have then some Religious meetings for Gods worship, (yea they had publique fasts then four times a year as appears (b)) yet their Assemblies was nothing so solemnne , or so populous, as they was want to be at Jerusalem, that was their grief.

^{c Lam. 1. 7.} 2. The Caldeans their enemies was want to reproach them for this, and to say to them to this effect, where are your solemnne Assemblies now (c) they did mock at their sabbaths, they rejoiced and reproached over them, because they could have no such Assemblies

Assemblies as they was wont to have, just as many wicked ones do now mock at our Churches, and their ministers, because people (having the reins loosed) may without fear forsake the publique Assemblies, to erect private conventicles for themselves, and do what they list as some can say to our very faces now.

3. The Text saith *this was a burden to Gods people, to have this reproach cast upon them*, as it is certainly to every true Protestant and godly man, to hear of the separatists insolent taunts to the congregations of the Church and the ministers thereof.

4. Of these that were so sorrowful for the solemne Assemblies, the Lord saith to his Church these are of thee, they are natural & kindly children of the true Church, that do stand thus affected.

5. To them he doth make a promise, I will gather them, saith the Lord : I will have a special respect to them, and though they be scattered and dispersed, not one of them shall be lost, but *I will bring them back again to their one Land. I will gather them, saith the Lord, that are sorrowful for the solemn Assemblies who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it, was a burden.* Indeed it

it is a burden to every one that hath a true love and zeal of God in him, to see Religion suffer the least eclipse in any kind, in any place, to lose any thing of that lustre of purity, sincerity or power, that once it had. Hence when the foundation of the Temple was laid, under *Zorobabel*, Gods people had seen no better rejoiced in it : but the Priests, and *Levites*, and chief of the fathers, who were Ancient men, that had seen the first house, *they wept with a loud voice, while the rest shouted for joy*(b).

b z a. 3 why ? O it grieved their hearts, to see how far short that house, which God was now to have, came short in beauty and glory, of that that God had had before in *Jerusalem*. For as much then as it is every ones duty especially the ministers, to consider the State of the Churches and especially that of which they are members, and ministers, to be affected with them, and to pray for them, and by all means to oppose the enemies thereof. And there is none of us, but stand in great need to be well grounded in these points that relate to the Church, least we be seduced by the cunning and diligence of seducers, that are abroad in the world, and all our comfort will be augmented, if by the light
of

of reason, and Gods word preached from such Texts (as this I have read) we can prevent the Apostacy of any from the Church, and can discover the wickedness of those that are dayly forsaking the Assemblies thereof. And it cannot but be matter of greatest grief to the truly godly to see the solemne Assemblies neglected , or unfrequented, or private congregations erected in opposition unto them. All these particulars shew I have great reason to make choice of the Text and such like unto it, till I have so fully discharged my duty and discovered the mind of God out of the Scriptures about it, that I may leave the forsaking of our Church assemblies inexcusable, so that they can never plead Ignorance of their duty and sin, and that I may say *liberavi animam meam*, I have delivered mine own soul. To this end and purpose have I pitched on the Text.

Not forsaking the Assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is.

For the coherence of the Text, I shall wish you to look no further back then the 22 verse. For the Apostle having in the former part of the Chapter shewn them, that the Sacrifice of Christs body

which he once offered, hath for ever taken away sin. He presleth thence a double exhortation. The first in 22 vese *let us draw near to God*, how? even in and through Christ, *with a true heart and full assurance offaith*, &c. And the Second is in the 23 verse. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering* : that is, this Doctrine of Christ sacrificed and the merits thereof; The truth we have received from Christ, let us avow it, and not in time of tryal upon any condition forsake it. Now this exhortation he strengtheneth, by giving of directions, for furthering their obedience thereunto : the first is, Christians mutually stirring up, and sharpening one another amongst themselves ; that is a special help to constancy in the true Religion, and a preservative against Apostacy, together with a godly striving one with another, who shall be first in love and well-doing. vers. 24. *Let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works.* And,

2. Another means to this end, is the frequenting Christian congregations & assemblies. So comes in my Text. *Not forsaking &c.* In the words you haye evidently two parts.

I, A Duty.

A

2. A Taxation of some for the neglect of
that duty.

1. The duty is to keep close to, and not
to forsake the Assemblies of the Church.

2. The fault taxed in some amongst
them is, that in Schism, or pride, or purpose
of Apostacie they withdrew themselves
from these Church assemblies, and so fell
back again, or were in the way of falling
back, to the open denial of Christ : for separa-
tion from the true Church, or the Christi-
an society of the faithful therein, is a re-
markable sin, tending to lead men by Schism
to Apostacy, from the profession of the
true faith.

1. Of the duty of Christians in order
to their proving constant in the true Re-
ligion : even to keep close unto, and not
forsake the assemblies of the Church. The
word for assemblies in the Text hath a
very great emphasis in it, it is a tricom-
posite *ἐπισυναγωγὴ* the preposition *ἐπὶ* as
both *Calvin* and *Hemingius* upon the place
obserye signifies *novam accessionem*, an in-
crease or addition of some more members
to a body congregated, And these were
the converted Gentiles, that being convert-
ed to the faith became one with the Jews
one and the same body of Christ. *Eftius*
observes,

observes, that because the Apostle here writes to the Jewes, therefore, for the Christian Assemblies he useth the word Synagogue, because he would not vary from their phrase or custome of Speech any more then needs. But might it not be some private meetings? Some separate assemblies in a corner that he calls by this name, and here speaks of? O no, Interpreters with one consent, generally interpret it of the publique assemblies of the Church in such publique places, as are by Christian Magistrates, or by the Rulers of the Church, if the Magistrates be not Christian, appointed for the publique worship of God. *Not forsaking the Assembling of themselves, that is, saith the London Annotations* the publique congregation of the faithful, wherein the word of God is taught, the sacraments administred, and common pray
er and publique Thanksgiving are offered up unto God; for unto such publique congregations hath God promised his blessing: where hath he promised it? Marke, the Scriptures quoted by the Assembly for it
dpsal.27.4.*are these (d) one thing have I desired of the Lord that I might dwell in the house of the Lord all the dayes of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his holy*

holy Temple ; for herein is implied this promise, that in the Temple, the house of God, there will God let us see his beauty. Another text quoted by them is (e) *I was glad, when they said let us go into the house of the Lord, our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem, thither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.* Of such assemblies therefore, even of such as go into the said House of God, whither the tribes, the Multitude of the right worshippers of God, go up to pray unto, and praise him, of these doth our Text speak. *Not forsaking the assembling &c.* And to these Assemblies the Annotations quote that special promise, as belonging unto them (f) *Where two or three are met together in my name,* that is, for prayer and other Religious offices, there am I in the midst of them. Christ promiseth his gracious assistance to, and presence with his Church be it great and numerous, or be it small, and with the publique and solemn congregation thereof. Yes, say the Schismaticks, where ever two or three are met together there is he in the midst of them, therefore the promise is to us, or any of the Saints, wherever, or how few soever they be

^{f Mat.}
_{20.}

be that thus meet together. There is no Text wherein the separatist take Sanctuary more than this, but very unsoundly. For as the Reverend Mr. *Ball* expounds that place (in his tryal of the grounds tending to separation) pag 280, by the context it appears Christ is there speaking of the Validity of the sentence of excommunication, and certainly Christ's meaning is not that every Society that consisteth of two or three believers met together to pray or preach, have the power to excommunicate: for no one example can be Alledged out of Scripture or Ecclesiastical History of the ancient Churches, wherein any number of the Faithful, did ever lawfully excommunicate or judg any Member of their Society, without their Guides and lawful Officers, moderating the action. There is no promise can be shewed out of Holy Writ, wherein any such authority is bequeathed to two or three private Believers, Disciples or Brethren. O, no, but the very tenour of the words is to argue from the less to the greater thus, If Christ be present with two or three gathered together in his name to ask things agreeable to his will, he will much more confirm in heaven what ever his officers and servants that have power from Christ to

to do this service in the Church in his name shall determine and conclude according to his will: but they cannot meet together in his name, for this or any other holy office, that meet together in way of Schism, contrary to his will. *Quomodo possunt duos aut tres in nomine Christi colligi quos constat a Christo & ab eis Ecclesia separant,* saith S Ciprian, how can they be met together in the name of Christ that do manifestly separate themselves from Christ and his Church. *Cum Heresies & Schismata nata sint, dum conventicula sibi diversa constituant veritatis caput & originem reliquerunt,* when Heresies and Schismes arise, & the maintainers of them make separate conventicles for themselves, they forsake Christ the Lord and fountain of Truth & peace. It is the Church and they that keep within the pale of the Chuch by unity and concord to whom this promise runs to give them, what, they meet together in his name to ask of him, and to be in the midst of them *I will be,* saith he, *in the midst of them,* That is, of them that fear me, and keep my precept of peace and truth, *Non homines a ecclesia dividit, qui fecit, & instituit ecclesiam, sed exprobrans discordiam perfidis, & fidelibus pacem suam voce commendans, ostendit magis esse se cum duobus aut tribus unanimiter orantibus quam cum decedentibus pluribus*

*pluribus, plusque impetrari posse paucorum
concordi prece quam discordi multorum o-*

De Unitate ratione. Saith S. Cyprian (g) Surely our Ecclesiæ as I find him quoted by Doct. Forbes in his Irenicum. Saviour doth not by this promise, warrant divisions from that Church, which he himself hath made and gathered, but rather upbraiding the contentions of the perfidious, and commending unity and unanimity to the faithful, he teacheth us that he will rather be with two or three of them met together with one accord in his name, and according to his appointment, then with multitudes of them that depart from them, and that he will rather answer the uniform prayers of a few peaceable believers, than the jarring prayers of many that divide themselves into sides and factions. Can they think that Christ will be in the midst of them, that are met together out of the Church of Christ? Nay though such should suffer Martyrdome in the confession of his name, yet cannot that blot and stain of their Schism be washed away in their blood, *Inexpiabilis & gravis culpa discordiæ nec passione purgatur*, the great and inexpiable fault of separation and dissention cannot be purged by the most bitter passion or suffering, *Esse martyr non potest qui in ecclesiâ non est*, he cannot be

be a true martyr that keeps not unity in the Church, *Ad regnum pervenire non poterit qui eam quæ regnatura est, derelinquit.* He cannot attain the Kingdome, that forsakes her, that must reign in it. It was peace that Christ gave us and bequeathed unto us. It is concord and unanimity that he hath commanded us. He hath strictly enjoyned us to keep the covenants of love and Charity pure and inviolate. So that he can never prove a right Martyr for the truth that keeps not Charity with the brethren. (b) *though I have faith so as to remove moun-
tains, or bestow all my goods upon the poor,
or give my body to be burned, and have not
charity, it profiteth nothing.* God himself is love, and therefore they that break the bond of love, can never have God. God cannot be in the midst of them; so that it is not to private conventicles that this promise runs, but to the publique congregations of the Church of which my Text here speaks. *Not forsaking the Assem-
bling of your selves as the manner of some
is.* My way being thus clear, and the meaning of the Text being thus made out and explained, I shall from what is said, raise this observation and prosecute it.

That it is the undoubted duty of all pious Christians,

Doct.

b 1 Cor.
12 2.

Christians, that desire to prove constant to the true Religion to frequent and not to neglect the publique Assemblies of the Church. Which truth that I may prove undeniable and convince the judgments of all that are teachable, and will not stop their ears against the truth, I will proceed in these gradual propositions,

Prop.

The First shall be the furthest off, but the foundation of all the rest, taken from the end of Religious Assemblies, even this, That God is to be worshiped: Adorability is due and proper unto God. There is such infinite absolute perfection in the divine nature, as necessarily calls for religious worship at the creatures hands, with this truth our blessed Saviour repelled that great temptation of the Divel to fall down and worship him (*i*), *It is written thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve.* This worship is due unto God, and is due unto God only, for he alone is qualified with those properties, and attributes, *omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, &c.* that are necessary to make a being Adorable, & so with him no creature can claim a partnership in divine Adoration and religious worship, without great Sacriledg, nor can any be given to it, without

*i Mat. 4,
105*

out gross and abominable Idolatry? by this are the Papists therefore convinced, of grievous Idolatry, in that they worship those things with a religious worship, which are no proper objects thereof; as Images, and Saints, and the like. But I onely name this Proposition, because it is alien from the Text, though the foundation of all that is to be said of it.

Those from whom this worship is due unto God, are all intelligent rational creatures, by the very obligation of nature. Indeed though there had never any been created by God to worship him, God had continued in his essential perfections as firm as ever. But being it was his good will to make the world, and rational creatures in it to adore him, there is therefore a natural obligation lying upon them, as his creatures, to worship him, and so, own their being, dependence, and preservation, as the product of their Creators goodness: what can be more just and equitable than for a depending being to adore the fountain of his being, and of his both present and future welfare? or what higher piece of unreasonable injustice can there be, then for the creatures to slight him from whom they drew life, & breath, and all? In a word God hath induced Angels, and men especially, with minds

and understandings for this very end, that they might know, honour, and adore him. He made all things, but them especially for himself, to do homage to him, and therein lies their natural obligation to serve and worship him.

Prop. 3. As for pure spiritual beings, such as Angels are, they need not (being incorporeal) be circumstantiated, either to time or place in rendering this actual worship to God.

They are not tyed to any time, strictly so called, because their very nature is measured by Eternity, and not by time; and, being of a spiritual nature, they have neither those avocations, by any particular calling, nor necessary diversions from Gods worship, as man, if he had continued innocent, must have had, for the very sustaining of his life, and being, which would have been even in *Paradise*, by ordinary means, by seasonable food. It is therefore Probable they have no set times, but continue constant in the immediate worship of God, unless when God applyes them as *πνεύματα λειτουργικά*, as his ministering spirits for the service of his Church; and then perhaps their, even then employments, speakes them only distant from the other Angels, their fellow worshippers, and not absent.

absent from the real worship & service of God.

3. Thus it appears they are not limited to any place neither, as they are not to any limited time of worship ; for they being Spirits are uncapable of any local circumscription : As for any further knowledge of the manner and circumstances of the Angels worshipping and adoreing of God, Scriptures have a deep silence concerning it, and it is a learned Ignorance for us to sit down satisfied and contented without the knowledge of that which God hath thought unnecessary to be revealed, indeed to inquire any further thereinto, may run us upon the rock of bold and unsafe conjectures in those matters, the knowldg of which we may well spare , without the least prejudice of our present comfort, or our future salvation. So come we to the.

Though the Angels , being pure spiritual Prop. 4: beings, are not yet, the sons of men (being of a mixt nature partly Spirit, and partly Body) by their very beings are determined both to time and place, in their rendring to actual worship unto God. The very same reasons that do evince a necessity of worship to be given unto God, by such creatures as are partly body and partly spirit, will inferr necessity of makeing time and place the inseparable adjuncts thereof.

Sutor. 6.
20.

¶. Nature dictates clearly, that some time is necessary to worship God in. For man, being part body, and part spirit, is naturally obliged to worship God with both external and internal worship ; to glorifie God both with body and spirit, which are his (a). Now all, especially external actions of man, must necessarily claim some time for the performance of them, nor can man conveniently set upon Gods worship unless some time be set a part, wherein he may be freed and disintangled, from his ordinary workes and imployments. Thus far time and worship seemes to fall under one and the same command ; for as God in creating the world, did concreate time together with the world : so, when God commands any religious worship to be performed by men, he withal implicitly commands the necessary circumstance of some time, wherein it may be performed, and it being highly rational, that the disposal of that time should be at the pleasure of God, whose the worship is ; therefore hath it pleased him to set a part some portion of our time, even a seventh part, when he might have required all, indulging us the rest, even the six parts to be imployed according to the necessity of our nature. Such is Gods infinite goodness and

and condescension of love unto us, to allow us so large a portion of our time for our selves. And therefore they act most basely and disingeniously, not to say highly dishonourably against God, who grudge him so small a pitance, or who would rob him of it, or by worldly imployments or pleasures, drinking, or sports, or idleness prophane it.

2. Very light of nature also teacheth some place to be necessary for man to worship God in, because every body, such as man hath, must by the very necessity of its being, be contained in some real place, and indeed to be in a place, is so proper for a body, as we may as well suppose it not to have a being, as not to admit of a local circumscription; neither can a body be, nor exist, nor operate, nor perform any action, unless it be in some place, and therefore the worship of God being an external action necessarily require a place for it. So come I to the,

*This first proposition
may be seen
handled
more largely
by Dr. John
Stilling
fleet in his
Shenna.*

3. That worship that is due unto God from these rational Beings, the more publique it is the better it is: so you see I come near to the matter of my Text. I say the worship which is due unto God the more publique it is, the better it is, the greater and the more visible is the joynct concurrence and As-

Prop.

sembling together of several worshippers, for the performance of the same action of religious worship, the more acceptable it is to God. This appears by several considerations.

1. By Gods manifold precepts, both in the old and new Testament, enjoyning several acts of publique worship; such were the commands of circumcision, and the solemne convocation, and ordinance of the Pasceover, under the Law, their several feasts, and their sacrifices, with the infinite rites appertaining to them, and the sundry precepts for Baptism and the Lords Supper, and publique Prayers, and confessions unto God, and collections for the poor; those sacrifices well pleasing unto God under the Gospel. These and others are outward visible publique acts of divine worship, required by God himself.

2. By publique performing of worship to God we stir up and mutually inflame each others zeal and devotion unto God, and so the more publique religious worship is, the more acceptable it is unto God, irrespect of others. St. Austin in his confession saith, that he was almost ravished with the Songs and Prayers of the Church & Congregation, so that the spiritual comfort, which he conceived by the sweet and heavenly

heavenly matter, which then the Christians joynly and orderly made, and in their publique Assemblies, made him weep for joy. And, I believe, there's scarce any Christian, but he hath sometimes felt his heart moved and affected towards God, in actions of publique worship, especially if uniformly and lively performed, more then at other times.

3. Publique worship is excellent, as publique; in respect of our selves, for our joyning in them is a badge of our profession; its a wearing of Gods livery; and confessing God before men, it shewes to all the world, that we are not ashamed to profess his word and Gospell, and our belief thereof, and obedience thereunto. And on the contrary our forsaking the publique assemblies, wherein God is rightly and purely worshiped, borders upon a Apostacy, and is the next door to a denying of God, and our profession of Catholick Christianity.

4. It is excellent, as publique, in respect of God, for the more publique it is, the more it tends, to the honour and glory of God, being a publique testimony and acknowledgement of our dependence upon, and piety to him before all the world, as with the heart we believe, so with the mouth we make publique confession of God unto Salvation:

as we have light of grace within us, so hereby it shineth forth before men, that they may see our good works, and glorifie our Father in heaven Christ tells us that *a candle is not lighted to be put under a bushel.* *Bono delectur manifestatio,* saith the Father, our good must be made manifest; therefore candles that have *bonum lucis* the goodness of light, must not be thrust, *Sub malotenebrarum*, under the evil of darkness; So that if the candle of light be in our soules, that is, if we inwardly worship God in our hearts and spirits, we must set it upon a candlestick, our inward piety and worship must appear in our outward and publique worship of God before all the world.

5. The acception of publique worship with God above private, is *de facto*, notorious by manifest reason of the thing: particularly it is evident in publique prayer, for if the prayer of one righteous man can avail much, how much more will it when the prayers of many ascends up to the Lord. This must needs offer violence to the Kingdome of heaven, and *the violent shall take it by force.* Surely in every congregation there are some truly righteous, and their presence cannot but bring down mercies on those others whose prayers for themselves have no promise to be heard

· heard non æquæ exoras quum solus Dmnu[m] ab-
secras, saith the Father. Thou doest not so soon
obtain thy desire, when thou prayest alone,
as when in the assemblies of the Brethren. for
in those Assemblies there is some thing more
then prayers even the concord, and consent, and
joyning in Love and Charity, and the cry of
the Priest, whose office it is, to make inter-
cession for the people, and, being of the
stronger size, to carry a long with them the weak
prayers of the people, and carry then unto
heaven, *Quod quis apud seipsum precatus acci-
pere non poterit hoc cum multitudine precatus
accipit.* Quare? quia si non propria virtus ta-
men concordia multum potest. The thing that
a man cannot obtain by himself alone, pray-
ing together with the multitude he shall ob-
tain, why? because when his own worth can-
not, yet the concord and union of the Assem-
bly may avail much. It is no reproach
to call the Churches Liturgy Common prayer,
the more common it is the better it is, and
the more effectual; when not onely two or three
but a whole Congregation are joyned, nay,
all the Congregations of a whole nation do
in the same words put their Common petitio-
ns and supplicatiens; O what a shrill noise
must this needs make in the ears of God. St.
Jerom likened it to a thunder clap. St. Basili
to

to the roaring of the Sea, it is like the several strings of a Well tuned instrument that makes a ravishing harmony, as the flame of one stick is nothing to that of a bundle on fire together, such is the devotion of one man to that of a whole Assembly, *vis unita fortior*, force united is somuch the stronger, a three-fold cable is hardly broken. So do the joynt prayers of Gods people united, and publique-ly put up unto God, move him as it were omnipotently and irresistably, they mount up to heaven, they rap at the gates and cannot easily be denyed entrance, like as the petition of a whole Corporation is more available to a King then the single petition of any particular person such is the power and profit of publique worship and devotion, And that by the way is a forceable argument to disswade the truely Religious from forsaking the assemblies, thats the fifth Proposition, the more publique religious worship is, the better it is.

rop. 6. The next in order is this. That divine worship may be truely publique. There is requisite the free and full assembling of our selves together in a publique place, set a part for the same. So you see I come home to my Text, so set it home upon your judgments consciences with fulness of evidence, and strength

strength of reason, as well as Holy Scripture. Give me leave to prosecute this Proposition by parts. To publicke worship; to make it publicque there is requisite the assembling of Minister and people in a publicque place.

1. Of Minister. His presence is necessary, unless in case of unremoveable impediment, as some sudden sickness, or some weighty cause of absence; for he is a person set apart for the administration of Gods publicke worship, he is consecrated to draw nigh unto God, he is by office an Ambassador or Messenger between God and man. Gods mouth, an Ambassador to the people, appointed to beseech them in Gods stead to be reconciled unto him. And he is the peoples mouth and Ambassador unto God, to offer up their requests for grace and mercy unto him. Gods mouth to them in preaching, and their mouth unto God in prayer. Hence (c) the Priests are required to put up petitions and supplications. Let the Priests, the Priest, of the Lord stand between the Porch and the Altar, and say spare thy people, good Lord spare them, And as under the Law it wasthe Priests office to burn incense, and *vazziah* was smitten of God with a loathsome leprousie for usurping it. So still under the Gospel it is the Ministerial office to offer the Sacrifice of publicque

^cJoel. 2.18

*Rom. 10.
40.* lique prayer unto God, which is as sweet smelling incense in the nostrils of God, and for preaching the word is express, how shall they preach unless they be sent, (d) how able so ever they be to teach the word and sound doctrine, yet if they have not a mediate and ordinary call or sending, which though it be by man, yet is divine, as Luther saith *they cannot preach to your profit, they come not to edifie but to destroy.* They are Luthers words. Let no uncalled speaker, Beloved, have any encouragement at your hands, having no mission from God. Our Saviour tells you, that what shew soever they make of holiness, and spiritualnes, and godliness, and saintship, and the like, yet they are wolves in sheep cloathing, thieves spoiling Gods heritage, deceitful workers, undermining the truth, therefore take heed of them, or forsaking the publique assemblies, to run after them to your perversition and destruction, such is the first requisite to a publique worship, the Ministers, the rightly called Ministers, presence in the Assembly.

2. That puplique worship may be publique indeed, the people ought to come and joyn in it, every one that wou'd be saved must be member of the true Church for *extr a ecclesian non est salus* out of the true Church and Religion, no man can find assurance of comfort

fort and Salvation. *Japhet* cannot be saved until perswaded to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, nor *Noahs* family out of the Ark. The visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered according to all those things that are necessarily requisite for the same. A true Church is chiefly to be distinguished from a false by purity and soundness of doctrine, and due administration of the Sacraments in it, And surely these are unquestionable in our Church of *England*, even in the confession of our adversaries, as it stands at this day reformed from the dreggs of Popery in its doctrine and worship. So then to this Church let every one joyn himself, and not seperate from it, if he would be saved (e) *The Lord* ^{eAct. 2.47.} added to the Church such as should be saved. *Regia via.* The King of heavens high way to Salvation is, by adding to the Church not by seperating from it. If God be our Father the Church is our Mother. (f) *Jerusalem* ^{fGal. 4. 26.} which is above, is the mother of us all. Hence the Church is oft called the Kingdome of heaven. (g) And that promise that is made (h) ^{g Mat. 13. 44.} the people that dwells there, shall have their sins forgiven, is to be understood of the catholic Church, and so by consequence is applicable ^{bEsa. 33. 24.}

plicable to every particular visible Church that is a visible member of it. It is a damnable conceit of some, that a man may be saved in any religion. There is but one Faith,

Ephe. 4.5. (i) one Way, one gate to life (k) And Gods
kMat. 7.13. promise is to call his Elect, that he will

Jer. 32.39. give them one heart and one way. (l) O then

it stands men instead to consider diligently, which is the true standing Religion, and the true Church and every one must wait upon the Assemblies in that Church, that publique worship may be joyntly and publiquely offered unto God, all the people ought to come to the first part of worship, even the confession of sins; and to joyn therein, and in all the other parts of worship with the Minister, that they may be truly publique. Hence both the Jews and Gods People in all ages have understood themselves bound in all their Liturgick services to say *Amen* unanimously to the prayers and praises, they have put up to God. And we have cause to bless God that our publique worship in this nation is not (as the Papists would have it,) in a forreign language or strange tongue, but in our own tongue, intelligible to all, so that all the people may understandingly joyn in every part thereof and say *Amen*. Its a priviledge this, other na-

tions

tions want ; O that we would prize and improve it. So that's the second requisite to make worship publique, the peoples joyning unanimously with the Minister in it. These two make up the assembly, they are the persons that are to assemble, but where ? this brings in a third.

3. Requisite to make Gods worship truly publique even a place fit, and known, and set a part for that purpose. The assembling of our selves together must be in a publique place, God by his instituted Law, did particularize and set a part to his people some places for his publique worship, and service: Paradise it selfe was a place designed not onely for innocent *Adam terram* but *Deum colere*, not onely to till the ground thereof, but also to worship God in it. And the place were *Adam* and his family had their residence after they was driven out of Paradise, was another place for worship, which when *Cain* Left he departed from the face of God (m). And vide Dr. Io.
Stillingfleet's
Phecinah. the Church of God being afterwards continued amongst the Patriarchs, they had their particular places for worship also, though not so solemn but occasional places onely : because they was always in a flitting and unconstant state, but after the Israelites came out of *Egypt* then was their places punctually determined by God himself, As.

I. The

1. The Tabernacle where the Arke of the Covenant and the Altar was placed. There God promised to meet with his people, that worshipped him; hence it was called *the Tabernacle of the Congregation, or the Tabernacle of Meeting,* as being both the place of their meeting together and Gods meeting with them. (n) Now this place was fixed as

ⁿExod. 29. the place of Jewish meeting, as being a type
42. and 30. of Christ our Mediator, by whom alone, we
36 nd.

^{Num. 17.4.} being strangers unto God, became acceptable to him, it is he that by offering himself a sacrifice to God for us, hath made him a propitious Father to us, and by whose intercession all our prayers, and service, and worship are accepted. So the Legal worship being to be performed on the altar and before the ark in the Tabernacle, it did typically teach that neither our persons, nor performances nor any worship we give God, would ever be acceptable to him, unless it be presented in and by Christ who was typed by them.

2. God commanded the Temple to be built for his publique worship, not that God ^{•Act 7.48.} would dwell in houses made with hands (o) but thus by way of condescension, he accommodated himself to his peoples capacity. That as a sovereign Monarch or Prince makes choice of some great City for his residence, so did

did the Lord of *Jerusalem*, which is called therefore the **City** of the great King. And as a Prince hath his palace in a great City, so would the Lord have his Temple within *Jerusalem*, which is therefore called the place of his habitation (a). The throne of his glo-^{a Ps. 75.2.}
 ry, b. The perfection of beauty, the joy of ^{b Jer. 14.21.}
 the whole earth (c), The place of his rest (d). ^{c La. 2. 15.}
^{d Ps. 132. 14.}
 Now the reason why God would have the portable Tabernacle erected by *Moses* to be changed by *Solomon*, into a more magnificent and stately Temple to be fixed at *Jerusalem*, it was to typify the heavenly Temple and Sanctuary into which Christ was to enter after his passion and resurrection, where we shall all appear before him to adore God in perfect peace for ever more.

Then

3. There was also places for worship among the Jews besides not commanded but only approved by God. viz; Their Synagogues, and Proseucha's, and places of prayer: for though they were to have but one altar and place for sacrifice, which the Lord should chuse to place the ark of his covenant there, the Tabernacle or Temple, yet had they other places for devotion and religious use. Their Synagogues was covered buildings, like our Churches, their Proseucha's were a

plat of ground encompassed with a wall, or other inclosures like our Courts, open above, in these they pray'd onely, in these they interpreted the Scriptures also, in the Temple they both pray'd, and interpreted, and sacrificed also : The one was without the City (e). The other was within (f) Moses having in old time in every City them that preached him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day: their Proseucha's or place of prayer Mr. Mede makes as Ancient as the times of Joshua (g). But as for their Synagogues many Authors will have their Original fetcht no higher then the Babylonish Captivity, thinking that necessity first taught the Jews the use of them, which after their return they brought with them into their own Country. But Aretius and Godwin do more probably conjecture that for as much as the Jews were peculiarly ingaged to worship God, and that there was but one Temple for the whole Nation where at the Males only were bound to appear but thrice a year; and that an hundred miles distant from them that dwelt in remote places, therefore that they might not be left wholly destitute of places for their ordinary meeting for publicke worship they built these Synagogues after they came into the promised

e Actis 16.13.
f Actis 21.
g Vid Diam.
b.e.on
John. 24.
25.

promised Land. Sure it is they were in David's time, whence that place (b) *They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the Land;* and being ca'led the Synagogues of God, we may gather thence that the Lord approved them, though he did not command them. So did our Saviour often frequenting them while he was in the flesh (i) both *Lu. 4.15.* evidently testifying his teal likeing of those ^{17. 2nd 21.} publique performances of religious worship that were then celebrated, and tacitely approved the places themselves, where they were thus solemnly performed, thus you see there were these several places for publique worship under the Law. But what Shall we now think of the time of the Gospel? Indeed our Saviour Christ hath removed all distinction of places through legal holiness, yet hath he still made ample provision for the authority of places for solemn assemblies for publique worship.

1. The distinction of place through legal holiness is removed by Christ. The Tabernacle and Temple had a legal holiness and ceremonial Sanctity put upon them, because of the Arkes being there (k). There and only there ^{Exo. 24. 11.} they was to Sacrifice, without an extraordinary warrant to the contrary. As the Hebrews say ^{Exo. 3. 29.} a private Alter was not lawful to be erected.

ed, but by a Prophet ; and when ever they prayed they was either to pray in the Taberna-

^{Ex. 25. 14.} cle or Temple (*l*) or else towat^s the same (*m*),

^{Ps 99. 6.} *m* Cor. 6. but that was for the thing typified by them,

³⁸ even Christ, through whom God accepts

^{1 Kings 8.} both of our persons and prayers, and all our

⁴⁴ *Dan. 6. 10.* performances. It is in and through his Me-

diation onely that we call upon God.

Therefore he the substance being come, the shadowes are vanished. There is now no

legal or ceremonial kind of holines^s in any

place however consecrated, to render any

duties there performed more acceptable un-

to God then if performed by the same per-

sons in like manner in any other places.

Divine worship under the Gospel is not

now tyed to any one place more than o-

ther, for any typical holiness in them. The

whole world is Gods universal, and as it were

Church Cathedral, and so as we may pray

^{2 Thes. 3. 12.} *Thes. 4.* at all times (*n*). So in all places (*o*) and

^{1 Tim. 6. 17.} *o* he can and will hear us from heaven his ha-

bitation, which is constantly alike distant

from us. That all distinction of places

through ceremonial holiness is abolished our

Saviour evidently teacheth in his discourse

with the woman of Samaria (*p*) she asked

^{3 Joh. 4.} him *in what place God was to be worshiped, whe-*

^{21. 22.} *ther on Mount Gerizim, where the Samaritan*

Temple

Temple was, or Mount Moriah whereon the Temple of Solomon was built : He answered her, *the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem worship the Father,* that is the publique worship of God shculd not be restrained to any place for its ceremonial holiness, as if it could render the parts of Divine service more acceptable to God, than if performed else where, for the body of ceremonial worship was now to expire, and the partition wall to be taken down and God was to be worshipped no more with Jewish ceremonies ; but the Gentiles was to be admitted to be his worshippers who together with the Jewes should worship him in spirit and truth, and this the Prophet Malachy foretold (q) from the rising of the Sun q Mal. 11³ to the going down of the same, saith the Lord, *my name is great among the Gentiles and in every place incense shall be offered in my name,* All this then shews the vanity of the Popish Pilgrimages to this or that place, as being more holy, or to pray before this or that Saint or Image, or relike, or tuteler God therof. Since all such difference of place is abolished by Christ, So that wheresoever we be with *Jeremiah in the Pit, or Daniel in the Lions denn, Job on the dung-hill, Hesekiah in his bed, the three Children in the*

Furnace, *Jonah* in the Whales belly, with Christ in the Mountain, in the Desert, in the Garden, on the House top, or on the Sea shore, with *Paul* in the Prison : we may call upon God and he will hear us ; thus on the one side we must hold this fast against the Papists, that all distinction of places is abolished. So that Christians may lawfully and acceptably worship God when and where their covenants direct them, Yet on the other hand be not deceived, as if there was no authority or excellency of some places for solemn Assemblies, for publicke worship, still under the Gospel above others.

2. Though the ceremonial holiness, be extinct, yet are there some places holy, as separate, and dedicate from a common to holy uses, though our Temples be not, as the Temple of *Jerusalem* was, parts of our worship of God, nor tipes of Christ body, nor are we bound to set our faces towards them when we pray, yet is it written (i) *my house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations.* The Saints meeting and Assembling there to pray, makes it be called the house of prayer, so the Assembly Sanctifies the place, and not the place the Assembly, as the Temple did, seeing, as I said before

before we are body as well as spirit, therefore very light of Nature teacheth us, that convenient places for Assembling for publique worship, are necessary, and those places capacious for many, that must joyn therein. And although in case of Persecution of Religion the meanest place is acceptable; yet when God is pleased to give his Church Kings to be nursing fathers, to allow publique places consecrated for publique worship, with what thankfulness then should we repair to them, which many of our Christian Brethren in the world would purchase with their whole estates and dearest blood. When God gave rest and quietness to his Church from the ten famers Persecutions, wherein they were glad to Assemble not in the fittest but safest places, perhaps in Dens and Caves of the earth, I say, when God gave her rest from them, then did they immediately erect Oratories for publique prayers, not sumptuous and stately, which could not then be possible by reason of the Chyrches poverty, nor plausible in respect to the worlds envie: but after when God was pleased to convert Kings to the Faith then was Temples and Churches presently built: and in building them no cost was spared, and nothing counted to dear

that was spent about them, Sacrilegious wretches are not in these times more desirous to pull down, than those devout professors of Christianity was to set up Churches. Thus did popular consent and the Magistrates civil Sanction design these places for publique worship, seperating them unto it and prevailing custome hath styled them Churches. Nay so did S. Paul himself
1 Cor 11. 18. 20. 22. and 34 compared. (5) what is it then but arrant madness and sottish Ignorance; in our Quakers to boast so much of the light within them, and yet to be in such darkness? Its contrary to the very light of nature, to decry and forsake the places set apart for religious worship, the necessity whereof for publique Assemblies is so evident even by natural light. How much better did the poor Heathens improve their natural dictates, than these pretenders to the light within, who from the sight of the necessity of some convenient place for publique worship invented their Groves, and Oratories, and Temples for the service of their Idol Gods, so then from all these considerations. Gods own setting apart places for publique Assemblies, under the law, and before it his approving those that his people did set apart, the authority that such places have by the very

very light of nature, as well as by Scripture, and the practice of the universal Church, though without placing any ceremonial holiness in them. I conclude that Divine worship may be truly Publicque which as publicque is so acceptable unto God, there is requisite as publicque persons Ministers and People to Assemble in it, so also a publicque place consecrated for the same, from which excellent consideration ascend we to an higher, which is in the very Text.

Prop. 7. The most Solemn and publicque Assemblies of the Church in these publicque places, are greatly to be esteemed and constantly to be frequented of all the faithful members of the same, in the negative (not forsaking) must needs be implied the affirmative to frequent them. It is a truth this, evidently following from those I have delivered. For if God is to be worshipped by all rationall beings, and that must needs be in some place in respect of our bodily parts, and that more publicque it is done the better it is, and that it be publicquely done it is necessary there be an Assembly of Minister and People, Pastor and Flock in a publicque place, then is it evidently necessary that such assemblies be frequented by all, in order to the discharge of this debt

debt of nature, the worship of God. Indeed to this we are obliged.

I. By selfe interest, because of the great blessing we may justly look for from God, upon his Ordinances in the publique assemblies, and that more than in any private meetings whatsoever ; for to the Church assemblies is that rightly applyed (*t*), the Lord loves the gates of *Zion* above all the habitations of *Jacob* (*v*). That special part

t Isa. 87.2. of divine worship Prayer, is compared to
u Mat. 7.7. *The whole* seeking a thing lost, and knocking at a gate
duty of man we desire to enter into, and sure when many

seek a thing together there is more hope of their finding it ; when many knock together at heaven-gates they will be sooner heard. Hence Gods people to shew an extraordinary desire to prevail with God in their prayers upon extraordinary occasions, they was wont to be extraordinary careful, that their Assemblies might be as publique as might be (*w*). Blow the trumpet in

w Joel. 2.15. Zion sanctifie a Fast call a solemn Assembly (*x*),
z verle. 16. Gather the people, Assemble the children. As if he should say leave none out. So *Jehosaphat* (*y*) Proclaimed a Fast throughout all

y 2Chr. 20.3. *Judah* (*z*). all Judah stood before the Lord
z verle. 13. with their young ones, wives, and children, and

a Ju. 20.26. (a) all the children of Israel went up and all the

the People came into the house of God, when they were to fight with Benjamin and then they prevailed. For this cause also was Hezekiah so careful togather so solemnly an assembly to keep the Pasleover. (b)

2. It's as necessary, this, for others good, ^{b2 Chr. 30;} for every man, especially Parents and Masters, frequenting the publique Assemblies, may do much good by their example. David was much comforted in seeing the peoples forwardness in going to Gods house. (c) Multitudes doubtless go astray and forsake the holy Assemblies, by seeing others of better rank and quality doing so before them : and on the contrary many would keep close unto them, if the better sort would but more conſcionably frequent them, Hence Solomon made his Scaffold in the Temple ; even in the midst of the Court, even that all the people might see him (d), and of King Joash it is said, when Athalia came into the Temple he stood by the Pillar as the manner ^{d 2Ch. 12.} was (e). So it is said of Josiah also (f) ; and therefore God did require that the Prince ^{e 2Kings 11.} should not onely joyn with the people ^{f 2 Kings 23:24.} in publique worship, and come in, when they come in, and go out, when they go out, but also should be in the midst of them, that they might all see him, and so take good example

example by him. And as to give good example to others, so that we our selves may partake of the fellowship and presence of Gods people that assemble there. For as every godly man loveth all such as fear God (g), and delighteth in their Company, (h) I am a companion to all them that fear thee and keep thy Commandement.) So doth he take most comfort in their company when they meet together in their assemblies to serve God. In the life to come, it shall be a great part of our happiness to meet together with all the faithful and to stand in the assemblies of the righteous, as may appear by that observation of the Apostle (i).

(g) Ps. 15. 4.
 (h) Psal. 119.
 (i) Thes. 2. 1.

we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him. And by the Prophets speech (k) sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous. And now we have some resemblance and foretaste of that comfort in our meeting together with Gods people in the Church assemblies here. For by their presents and fellowship, Gods grace is both confirmed and nourished, and increased in us (l), as Iron sharpeneth Iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend, hence when the Brethren met Paul at Apia Forum, he praised God and took courage

(k) Psal. 5.

(l) Ps. 27. 17.

rage. It revived his spirit to meet with them (n), so in respect of the example we ~~were~~ ^{Ps. 23.} are to give others, and that sweetnesse of ^{15.} having fellowship with Gods people, we have cause to esteem hightly and frequent the Assemblies of the Church.

3. That tendernesse that is due to Gods honour and glory obligeth every conscientiable Christian hereunto : as well as his care to give good example, and own his benefit. For the more publique the assembly is wherein we worship and the better it is frequented, the more is God glorifyed before all the world. And the more solemn is the profession which we make of that duty and homage which we owe unto him : upon this account it is required of great ones (o) to ^{Ps. 39. 12.} worship the Lord in the Sanctuary, that so they might give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Hence David vowed, he would ^{Ps. 35. 18.} give thanks unto the Lord in the great congre-gation, and praise him among much people. And Hezekiah resolved to go up to the house of the Lord the third day, so soon as ever he was recovered. (p) Indeed we cannot ^{2 Kings 20. 20.} better professe our religion, and homage and obedience unto God, our love and thankfulness unto him for all his mercies, than by diligent frequenting the most solemn Assemblies

^{p Lev. 26.2.} Assemblies of his Church; hence the Professors of the true religion are expressed by these two things, (p) ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my Sanctuary. Nay I add

4. To frequent them is not onely our duty but privilege also, it is one of the greatest mercies we enjoy on earth that we can have liberty to go to the house of God publicuely to Assemble in them to worship him there, and should we not then chearfully frequent them? There was nothing I am sure that David desired more in the time of his banishment, than this liberty, and nothing in which he rejoiced more, when he had it (q) unicum one thing, only one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I shall require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the

^{t Psa. 42.1.} beauty of the Lord, and to visit his holy Temple.

2. (r) As the Hart panteth for the rivers of water, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God, when shall I come and appear before the presence of God! and verse 4. He saith that his soul languished when he considered, that had it not been for the tyranny of his enemies he might have gone with the rest of the assembly into the house of God; and (s) in a kind of abrupt affectation he breaks out, O Lord of hosts how amiable

are

^{s Psa. 84.1,}

1

are thy Tabernacles, my soul languisheth, yea, and fainteth that I might come into the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryes out for the living God, and verse the third he seems to envy the Sparrowes and Swallowes, that had liberty to lay their young where he had no access; and then he cryes out abruptly with a wonderful pathetical exclamation, *O thine altars Jehovah, my King and my God,* And in the three next verses he pronounceth them happy? not onely that dwells in the Lords house to praise him, but that hath but liberty to come to the Church, though it were with a long and tedious journey, through thick and thin, through the Valley of Baca the rain filling the pools. Yea, he prefers a day spent in Gods house before a thousand elsewhere, and the meanest room and most contemptible office, a door keepers place, before the highest in the tents of wickedness. David was deeply sensible, you see, how great a priviledge the liberty of Gods house is. And it is observable to the same purpose, when Hezekiah upon his prayer had his sentence of death revoked, in what terms Gods goodness is declared, behold I have healed thee, and the third day thou shall go up to the house of the Lord (*t*) intimating how ^{2 Kings} _{20.5.} special a favour it was that he should have

health

health and strength, so shortly to go to the worship of God, in the house of God: yea, the Scriptures plainly teacheth us, that though God be every where present (*u*) do not I fill hea-

*u*Jer. 23. 24 *ven and earth saith the Lord, the most high dwelleth not in Temples made with hands, he is not*

See this largely de-monstrated. confined in them (*x*): yet, is he in special sort

in Dr Stil-lingfleets, Sherinah (*y*) *in the congregation and Assemblies of his*

ACTS 7. 48. people. And sure that shewes it a great

priviledge to be in Gods presence, as the Queen of Sheba thought Solomon's servants

happy that stood before him. Now Gods

publicke worship is called the face and pre-

sence of God. (*z*) Hence when Cain was for-

1Pe. 105. 4. end 42. 26. his murder banished from the place where his

Parents and their families met together for

2Gen. 4. 14. the worship of God, as Piscator interprets

the place (*a*). It is said he went out from the

presence of God. And David desired to behold

in the house of the Lord, the beauty of the Lord

(a), and he said, we will wait for thy loving

kindness, O Lord in the midst of thy Temple

(b). And the place of Gods worship under

2Pe. 26. 2. the Law was called Bethel, Gods house, and

the glorious Sanctuary (*c*), because the glory

of the Lord filled it and sensibly appeared in

Ex 40. 34 it, in the Tabernacle (*d*) *and in the Temple,*

1 Kings. 8. 12. and (e) Zion is called the habitation of Gods

fPe. 26. 8; house; and the place where his honour

dwelleth

And Gods presence is no less in our Christian assemblies, for so runs the promise (a) where two or three are met together in my name ^{a Mat. 18.} where am I in the midst of them. Hence S. John ^b saw him walking in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks (b). And the assemblies of Gods people under the Gospel may as well be called glorious, because the glory of the Lord appears in them also, though not so sensibly, yet no less comfortably and effectually, as is plain by that comparison the Apostle makes, between the ministry & worship of God that was under the Law; and this that is under the Gospel; preferring this for glory and excellency far above the other (c). yea, and as effects of this presence of God, O consider, what benefits are enjoyed in these assemblies, even matters of that worth that the very Angels themselves desired to stoop down to behold (d), that most comfortable and precious treasure of Gods holy word, the ministry of reconciliation, (e) the preaching ^{e 2 Cor. 5} of the word, which is the door of Faith, ^f (f) that ordinance of God by which his Saints are gathered, and the body of Christ edified; (g) that powerful means by which Satan is made to fall from heaven like lightning (h), and his strongest holds are beaten down in us; (i), that key of knowledge (k) ^{i 2 Cor. 10.} ^k A&ts 20. ^{27.}

178. *The Obligation of Conscience*

Rom.4:11. by which it is opened unto us the whole coun-
sel of God (*l*), Those Sacraments which
are seals of the righteousness which is by

Psal.65.2. Faith (*m*), those Monuments of Gods ex-
ceeding love unto us in Jesus Christ ,
those seals of the kingdome, those feasts
for our souls of fat things full of marrow,
those exercises of common prayer and
praising God in their proper places, that
house of prayer, praise, waiting for God

Heb.1.14. in *Sion*. (*n*) O what priviledges are thele!
inestimable unutterable; had I the tongue of
men and Angels I could not set it out suf-
ficiently. Such cause have we to love Gods
house, and to frequent and highly to e-
steem the assemblies of the Saints in it and
we are sensual, Sottish, Foolish, above mea-
sure, if we do not frequent and esteem
them. Nay as there is a special promise
of Gods presence in such publick assem-
blies so of Gods special protection of them,
of which the Angels are special ministers.

Ex.34.7. For as they have a charge from God to mi-
nister and do service to Gods people (*o*)
and to pitch their tents about them when
they assemble to serve the Lord. Hence
under the Law, the Curtains that the Ta-
bernacles were made of was full of cheru-
bims (*p*) with the figures of them ; the
walls of Solomons Temple were carved
round

round about. q, both which typified the presence & attendance of the holy Angels upon the whole Church & Body of Gods people,

<sup>q 1 Kings 5.
29.</sup>

as at all other times and in all other places, so especially at their Church assemblies; but see a full promise of protection to them,

(r) read it. Hence David gives this for one reason (s) why he, so highly esteemed Gods tabernacles, for saith he, the Lord is a

<sup>20, 21.
Psal. 84.
11.</sup>

Sun and a Shield unto us, and (t) in time of trouble he will hide us in his Pavilion, and in this respect they that are excluded from the Church assemblies are said to be delivered up to Satan, unto his power and will, and men plac't under Gods, protection no longer. Therefore it concerns us to frequent the publick assemblies of Gods people, both out of self love, and for the good we may reap by others fellowship, and for others good, and for Gods glory, and for the excellency of the privileges in having liberty of Gods house, we have all the reason in the World, to frequent, and highly to esteem them above any private meetings, that seek to overturn them, or our estimation of them. Now from all that hath been said there naturally issueth an.

Eighth Proposition which is in Prog. 8.

N 2

the

the very letter of my text, That it is a very sinful thing in any member of a true Church to separate from , and forsake those holy and publick Assemblies, *not forsaking the Assembly of your selves together, as the manner of some is.* That it is sinful appears sufficienly by what is said, as it is a meanes of making the worship of God less acceptable, of giveing evil examples to others , of abateing of Gods Glory, of despight or contemning so excellent a priviledge, of depriving your own soules of the fruition of Gods presence , and of so great blessings flowing from it , the word rightly taught , the Sacrament purely administrated , which should nourish and refresh your soules , and strengthen your faith, and confirm your assurance of Gods love in Christ. The Churches prayers and so of that blessing which our joyn特 prayers might bring down with a full measure upon us. Of the praises thereof, and so that chearfulness and reviving of spirit which we might enjoy, by having fellowship in those spiritual songs where Gods people do sing of his righteousness of all these benefits men wilfully deprive themselves, that forsake the Assembling together in Gods house. And how-

however some men may foolishly imagine, that they can do well enough with the private use of the words though they enjoy not the publick, and can pray well enough by themselves though they have no society with the general and publick devotions. Yet is it sure on the contrary, that there is no such promise made to the private as to the publick. Nay, none at all to the private if the publick be neglected, or contemned. Such a woeful thing it is, for men to do themselves the greatest injury that can be, to deprive themselves of Gods presence by forsakeing the assemblies of his people; upon this ground Gods people complained of the effect of the rage and fury of their enemies; (*t*) ^{1Psal.47.7.} They razed the sanctuary to the ground, defiled the dwelling place of Gods name, and burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the land, And *Jeremiah* in his Lamentations (*u*) ^{Lam.1.4.} The waies of Zion lament, because no man cometh to the solemn feasts, all her gates are desolate. And hence the sentence of excomuunication hath ever by religious soules been accounted, the greatest of punishments, as casting them out of Gods presence and giving them up to Satan (*x*) so sottish are ^{xxCor.5.1.} they that willfully excommunicate themselves by forsakeing the assemblies. It is like

a mans being outlawed in matters of civil Government, by which he is deprived of all the benefits and protection, belonging to a subject of the realm. Just so doth this censure put them out of the privileges of Christians and our of Gods protection for a time, so as to be reckoned as strangers or foreigners, as heathens and publicans
 , Matt. 18,
 17. (3) The sin of these men will best be discovered if we pass from this eighth proposition to the second General in the Text.

2. The Apostles taxation of some for this sin offorsaking the Assemblies, and so putting themselves in a way of apostacy, or falling back from, or wavering in the profession of the true faith; for so the Text runs, *not forsaking the Assembling your selves together as the manner of some is.* So then in the Apostles judgment those some; who ever they be, are blame worthy, and are to be reproved, and sharply rebuked what motives soever they may have for forsaking the publick Assemblies of the true Church, they cannot forsake them and be innocent, it is an act that cannot be acceptable unto God, *not forsaking the Assembling of your selves together, as the manner of some is.* As there are diverse persons that forsake the assemblies: So are their motives to forsake them different, some give one account thereof, and some another

ther all blame worthy. Let us but consider and weigh the Apollogies and motives of some of them.

I. The manner of some is to forsake the assemblies upon pretence of some corruptions in them. It is holyness and purity these men pretend to in a high measure, and therefore they forsake our assemblies, because as they affirm, they are unholy, being mixt assemblies, consisting of both good and bad, (a) a miscellany, Multitudes, of the seed of woman, and of the Serpent, and much more they inveigh and rail bitterly against them, and thence inferr a necessity of separation from them; (z) but that this is a most corrupt, ^{a vide Robins} and Cans books. and unsound inference will appear if we ^{z Heb. 12.} 14. consider.

II. That the purest Church on earth is not free; perfectly free from all corruptions: The spouse of Christ is comly yet black. It becomes Christs Church to be as true, so humble, far from arrogating perfection. For any Church on this side heaven to say that she is absolute, and neither wants nor abounds, were the voice of *Laudicea*; or *Tyrus* in the Prophet. As there is no Element which is not through many mixtures departed from its first

simplicity , so is there no Church that breatheth in so pure an air , but it may justly complain of some thick and unwhollome evaporationes, of sin and error in it. Was not the Church typed by *Noahs Ark*: wherein was unclear as well as clean beasts?doth not Christ compare it to a feild wherein grows both tares and wheat promiscuously until the harvest ; (a) to a great house wherein are vessels of Gold and Silver , and of Brasse earth and clay ; (b) to a sheep fould wherin are foulded both sheep and Goats ; (c) to a company of Virgins all invited by an external call to the Wedding , whereof some were foolish , some wise ; (d) to an orchard or vineyard ; (e) wherein all are not fruitful trees that bring forth their fruit in due season. But on some God bestowes digging , and dunging unto them , and fencing them , which cumber the ground and are good for nothing but to be cast into the fire. To a vine in which are some branches that onely bear leaves of profession , or at the best but sowre grapes. Nay , sometimes in a true Church , even the chiefest members for eminency and Authority are corrupted , sometimes the prime Governours of a Church (as the chief Priests and Elders in our Savi-

*a Mat. 13.**i2.**b 2 Tim. 2.**20**c Matt. 25**32.**d Mat. 25. I**e Esai 61. 1.*

Saviours time) may be great enemies of real goodness. Nay, to come closer to our selves,

2. We must acknowledge that even in our Church, and the Assemblies thereof there is such general decay of that first love, and primitive piety which consisted chiefly in Humility, Mortification, Obedience, and good works, and such a general increase of all filthy and abominable sins, and those too frequently uncensured, unreproved that there is just cause for any Godly man to fear least God be about to take away his tabernacle from amongst us, and remove our candlestick, and go far off from our sanctuary, (f)

fEzek. 8.6.

3. It is undoubted that when a pious Christian considers these things he ought to be deeply affected with them, and neither communicate with a whole Church in any corruptions, that are evident corruptions in it, nor yet partake in the sins of any the particular members thereof : but observing his brothers prophaness, his duty is to admonish him, and to bewail his sin, and do what lies in him to bring him to a reformation thereof. This is the right course, but

4. This is no ground at all for him to separate from the Church, or to forsake the

the Assembly there of (it is of Mr. Hilders-
hams Doctrines, agreeable to the nineteenth
Article of the Church of England) and
that those Assemblies that injoy the word
and Doctrine of Salvation though they may
have many corruptions remaining in them,
yet they are to be acknowledged true Chur-
ches of God, and such as none of the faith-
ful may make separation from, because,

1. There was never Church on earth
free from corruption, either in the whole
or in its particular assemblies, and yet
never did the Saints of God forsake them,
upon that account. Never was there
Church from the beginning of the world,
to this day, from one side of the Earth to
another, pure in all her members. Adams
house that as the first Church on earth,
yet did it contain Cain a bloody murderer,
as well as Abel a devout worshiper in it.
Presently after did God raise up Seth in-
stead of Abel, to be a holy seed unto him,
and even then did not the Church continue
long free from profane mixtures, but the
sons of God became enamoured with the
beauty, and matched with the daughters of
men. And so the deluge came upon them.
Now from the deluge God preserved Noah
in the Ark; there was the Church again,
and

and behold, in that ark there was accursed *Cham* as well as a blessed *Shem*. As also in *Abrahams* family, a scoffing *Ismael* as well as a devout *Isaac*. And in *Isaacs* a prophane *Esaу* as well as an holy *Jacob*; And O what Scandals brook out among the Patriarchs! *Ruben* became incestuous. *Simeon* and *Levi* brethren in evil. After this, when the Church was enlarged into great congregations, and assemblies, O what impatient murmuring do we read of among the children of *Israel*, what foul Idolatries committed in the Wilderness, what serving of *Baalim* time after time in the Land of *Canaan*, what horrible and scandalous sins were committed amongst them under the Judges? how was polygamy and unreasonable divorces, and setting up high places in the daies of the best Kings? and what a deluge of prophaneness and Idolatry must you needs think there brake out in the worst, when men did not onely sin secretly but openly? they shewed their sin as *Sodom*; when the Priests that should have restrained them, led them on by evil examples; when the more holy were as signes and proverbs of reproach, and yet in all these successive generations, we do not read of any se-

pera-

perations from, or forsaking the Church assemblies, as the manner of some now is. Its true in Idolatrous times the Saints did refuse to joyne with the ungodly in Idolatrous worship. So in *Ahab's* time there were seven thousand that had not bowed their knee to *Baal* but yet never was the wicked (until convicted and censured) debarred from joyning with the Godly in the true worship, nor was the Godly ever enjoyned to separate from them for fear of defilement by them. Nay, on the contrary we shall find that when our Saviour was born, then was the Church so corrupted that the Temple was become a den of thieves, and yet then *Joseph* and *Mary* the parents of Christ did joyn themselves to the congregation in Gods publick worship? Nay they went a long journey with their child Jesus to satisfie the law to offer their turtle Doves and a pair of young Pigeons, and to take part with the Priests and Gods people in that which was good and for the rest they meddled no further then their places required, an Example Saith *Calvin* and *Marlorat* express against our Brownists, and all our Separatists, and Recusants, and that which may justly and finally stop their mouths for

for ever might be this? if they would but consider how corrupt was the State of the Church in our Saviour's time, and yet how far forth our Saviour did communicate with them in the service of God not forsaking the assemblies of the Church, though then so corrupt.

1. For the Priests and Teachers they <sup>g Matt. 23.
16.</sup>
were ignorant and unlearned; (g) Nay, ^{verse 3.}
wicked and ungodly (h) even the High <sup>b John v.
44.</sup>
priest himself did enter unlawfully into his calling, for whereas by Gods ordinance he was to hold that once during his life, it was bought and sold and made annual, which is imply'd in that exoressi- <sup>i Luke 4.
on (i) Caiaphas was high priest for that year. 28, 29.</sup>

2. Most of the people in most of the places, where our Saviour conversed were notoriously and obstinately wicked. He lived most in Nazareth and see what they were there; (k) all that were in <sup>k Matt. 11.
20, 21.</sup>
the Synagogue were fill'd with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the City, and led him to the edge of a hill to thrust him down headlong, yea and all the Cities where most of his great works had been done he upbraided, no to thee Corazin, no to thee Bethsaida; (l) nor were the people of Jerusalem better. For when Piat a Gentile
of-

offered to release him, all the multitude crying out at once, *not him but Barabas;*
 Luk. 23.
 18. now Barabas was a robber (m). And when Pilat washed his hands protesting
 for Christ's innocence, they all said desperately *his blood be upon us and our children* (n), And for the worship it self.
 Mat. 27.
 25. that was used in our Saviour's time, it was very corrupt.

1. They then urged the use of many superstitious ceremonies, more strictly than the commandments and ordinances of
 Mark. 7. God (o).

2. They profaned the Temple and made it a den of thieves.

3. They abused the Discipline and censures of the Church shamefully, (p) the Jewes decreed that if any one confessed that Jesus was the Christ, he should be excommunicated *ipso facto.*
 Joh. 9. 22.

4. Their doctrine was corrupted in many points as these of divorce of the first, Murder, adultery (q). So corrupt was the Church then; and yet mark, our Saviour did not separate from it, but communicated with the publick assemblies in the worship of God.
 Mat. 5. 21.
 28.

1. When an infant he was circumcised, and by that Sacrament incorporated
 Luk. 2. 21. into that Church (r)

2. When

2. When his mother was purified, he was brought to the Temple, and presented to the Lord with his offering as ^{fLuk.2.22,} the custome was (*f*).

3. He often heard such teachers, as taught in the Church (*t*)

4. He was wont every Sabbath to joyn in publick prayer, with the Congregation that were at Nazareth (*u*). ^{tLuk.2.46.} ^{uLuk.4.16.}

5. He received the Sacrament of Baptism in a congregation of that people.

(x) When all the people were Baptized ^{x Luk.3.2.} he was baptized also.

6. He communicated in the passeover with the people, and the Priest (*y*). ^{yJoh.2.13.}

7. He allowed his Disciples to hear those teachers. (*z*) Nay, he commanded ^{zMat.23.} the Leper whom he cleansed to go and shew himself to the Priest, and offer his gift in the Temple. (*a*) Neither did any ^{aMat. 8.} of the Saints in any Age, nor Christ himself, nor his Disciples separate from, nor forsake the publick assemblies of the true Church, that enjoyed the word and doctrine of Salvation for any corruptions in them. Then these instances what can be said more convincing, if men had ears to hear, what the spirit hath recorded of the Churches. The fore quoted Mr.

Hildersham

Hildersham upon this point, hath two other reasons why we may not forsake them for their corruptions, who because he is of much authority with many dissenters, and I wish they were all of his sober spirit, therefore I will offer them to your consideration. *Valeant quantum valeer possent.* Indeed there is no cause to forsake them for their corruptions, because,

2. Notwithstanding such corruptions yet so long as God continues his word and doctrine of Salvation to a people, and in their assemblies, it is evident he dwells among them, and hath not forsaken them should men make themselves wiser or purer than God himself, to forsake those assemblies which God hath not forsaken till God hath forsaken a Church sure no man may forsake it. So shall any man pretend to be holier and to hate corruptions more than the Lord, the holy one of *Israel*? Now you may see Gods promise to dwell among and not forsake his Church, where the word and true worship of God continues, (c) *I will set my tabernacle among you* (that is my Solemn worship whereof the tabernacle was a principal part) *and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and I will be your God and*

*c Leu 26.
11, 12.*

and you shal be my people. In Judah is God known, his Name is great in Israel (a). <sup>a Psal. 76.
12.</sup>
in Salem is his Tabernable and his dwelling place in Sion.

But may not this Church (may some say) be guilty of such sins and corruptions as deserve that God should forsake it, and for which God in his word hath threatned that he will forsake it, although he hath hitherto dwelt therein.

True, but that is no sufficient warrant for any to separate from it, till it undoubt-
edly appear that God hath indeed forsaken it, and put in execution what he hath justly threatned against it. Though adultery (either in Man or Wife) give just cause of separation, the bond of wedlock being broken by it, yet till a Bill of divorceement do pass between them, they remain still Man and Wife notwithstanding that sin. So that the woman, whom her Husband had wronged, is called his Wife. (b) Esau had justly de-
served to lose the prerogative of his birth ^{b Mat. 2. 15.}, right, and superiority over his Brother, when he had despised and sold it (c), and <sup>c Gen. 25.
34.</sup> God had by his decree said of them, *the el- der shall serve the younger.* (d) And Saul deserved to be deprived of his Kingdome. <sup>d Gen. 25.
23.</sup>

O yea .

yea, God had said that he had rejected him.
^{e 1 Sam. 13.}
^{f Gen. 32.}
^{g 1 Sam. 24.}
^{h Joh. 6.68.}
^{i Heb. 2.3.}
^{4.5.}
^{7,9.}

(c) yet till God saw it good to put his decree and oracle in execution, and actually to depose the one from his birth right, and the other from his Kingdome, Jacob acknowledged Esau his Lord and Superior (f), and David, Saul (g): So though a Church may be unworthy before God of the name of Christ's Church, for the many corruptions that are in it, and the Lords threatenings are gone out against it, yet till God put this threat in execution, and actually take away his Tabernacle and worship from i, it is still to be acknowledged and reverenced as the Church of Christ, and not to be forsaken by the members thereof.

3. Who is it that dare forsake and separate from these assemblies; where men may be assured to find and attain to salvation; *Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life.* Accounting this a sufficient reason why they might not leave him (h), but men may be sure to find and attain to salvation in such assemblies, where the ministry of the word and the Doctrine of Salvation is continued and purely delivered. For the word and Doctrine of Christ is called salvation (i). It is the ordinary

dinary means appointed by God to bring men to salvation. (k) It is the incorruptible seed, at one time or other effectual in all Gods Elect that do enjoy it, (l) it is the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls. (Thus far Mr. Hildesham.) All the enemies of our Church cannot deny, but that both many have been and are still saved in the bosome thereof. Nor can the malice of those Chams that desire to espy the nakedness of their Mother, and glories to discover them, shew one fundamental error with us, not one Heresie whatsoever, how dare they then forsake our assemblies as their manner is? What though some others of your fellow members be guilty of sins and errors, is that any prejudice to your salvation, if you partake not with them, but rather reprove them, and preserve the true Faith and religion inviolate in your selves, although they by walking unworthy of their callings, and neglecting the conditions of the promises, do forfeit their part in the blessed privileges thereof, and the things promised. Yet shall the promises be made good to you, if you be sound members of the Church. Nor shall it prove any prejudice to your salvation, that you are mixed with the wicked

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in it : if you be not partakers of their sins. (n) *The wheat shall be gathered into the Lord's garner, and the chaff shall be cast into the fire.* Hence the Apostle, (o) What if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the Faith of God of no effect, sure it cannot and therefore being there is no Church on earth free from all corruptions, no not in its Chiefest members; being that saints in their several ages did not forsake the Church because of corruptions in them, being our Saviour hath left us his own practice for an incomparable example, being God himself forsakes not such Churches, and Salvation may be had in them, and the prophaneness of the ungodly is no prejudice to the salvation of the godly members of the Church. Then surely it is a sin in separating from our Church assemblies upon the pretence of some Corruptions in them. Who, however they usurp the Title of saints and Godly, and Puritans, and Christ Kingdom, and Spiritual, and the like, yet s. Jude (p) markes them with a black coal, *These be they who separate themselves, saith he, sensual hating not the spirit.* Our Christian duty is to mourn for, and shew our dislike unto what evil we see in the Church

Church or in our fellow members. So did the Faithful before the captivity; (q) ^{q Ezek.9.4.} so did Christ (r) We must wait upon God ^{r Luke 19.} who will in his due time cast his gold into the ^{41.} furnace, and purifie it seven times, will file off the rust and come with his fan in his hand, and separate the wheat from the tares at the day of particular and general judgment * Admo- ^{* Aug. con-} nendi sunt pii ut arripiant quod possunt, quod tra parmon non possunt patienter ferant, ut cum dilectione lib. 3.

& gemant & lugeant donec aut emendet Deus & corrigat, aut in messe eradicit zizanio & paleam ventilis. But we may not separate our selves from or forsake the assemblies thereof on this pretence, as the manner of some is.

2. The manner of some is to forsake our assemblies upon pretence they dislike the Pastors and Ministers thereof. Some this or other is a miss in their own minister, and therefore they care not for hearing them, having itching ears, they hunt out, or up heap teachers to themselves. To these men I shall first offer two or three things that directly tend to their better information, concerning their Obligation to their own Pastor, and then I shall answer their complaints of him: and shew how groundless their forsaking the solemn assemblies

is in this respect. The notes I shall give tending directly to your better information are Mr. Hildershams again, who I believe gives in them the sense of all the old Nonconformists in this point, and if they be well weighed, I do believe they startle those of the Presbyterian persuasion, that separate themselves from our Church, or set up private meetings in time of publick worship, and consequently in opposition to it. They are these.

A&ts 14.

23.

e Titus 2.

5.

1. Doubtless it is Gods own ordinance that every Pastor should have his own flock to attend upon and labour amongst them, for so it is written (s) the Apostles ordained Elders in every congregation, so speaks S. Paul to Titus (t) for this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee.

2. By necessary consequence from the former, it must needs be alike the ordinance of God, that every one of Gods people should have a Pastor of his own to depend upon, & attend unto. For the duty of Pastor and People is relative and mutual, if the one be obliged by Gods ordinance to attend to a particular people, then is that particular people obliged, by the same ordinance to attend to their particular Pastor. He may discharge

this

this duty indeed, though they be so head strong as not to submit to his ministry, though they will not hear, or be warned by him as their watchman, yet may he, by a Faithful fulfilling the work that he hath received of the Lord, deliver his own soul: but then all this while, they by their own perverseness may lose the benefit of his ministry, and by forsaking him deprive themselves of those holy warnings, and instructions, which he, from the Lord, prepareth for them, as the straying sheep doth of that inspection, and provisior which his careful shepherd would have over it, ~~and~~ if it continued in its just bounds, so that it is every ones duty by the ordinance of God, to expect the Law at his own Pastors mouth, To depend upon his ministry, and hear what the Lord shall speak to him. Yea, he is obliged to this even in order to his own benefit.

3. It is Gods ordinance also, (because requisite by good order in the Churches, which is Gods ordinance) that Christians should be distinguished & sorted into congregations, according to their dwellings that they that dwell next together should be of the same congregation, and assembly. The general equity of these rules shewes that it is Gods ordinance.

1 Cor. 14. God is not the Author of confusion but of peace, **33, and 40.** as in all the Churches of the Saints. And let all things be done decently and in order; the word *Parochia*, signifying parish doth evidently in its Element, denote a compass or circuit of Inhabitants dwelling next together, and so belonging to the same Congregation, this as it evidently took place for order sake amongst the Jewes, Moses being read to every particular Congregation, in their particular Synagogues in every Church, every Sabbath day. **Acts 15.21.** So for the same good Orders sake, which was the undoubted ordinance of God, the same is still on force under the Gospel. For St. Paul left *Titus* in Crete to ordain Elders in every City. So that they that lived together in the same town, was apparently to be under the charge

Titus 15. of the same Pastor, and Elder. (*x*) Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the o-

1 Pet. 5.2. versight thereof not by constraint, &c. (*y*)

*Striking fleet
Irenicum*

353. ¶ Alii. rate Dissenters, from the Church, have in some respects allowed mens leaving their own Pastors, to hear others better pleasing to them, yet have they so far acknowledged the evidence of the truth of these particulars shewing peoples obligation to their

their own Pastors, that they taught it thus. That men might not ordinarily or usually leave them, and when they leave them they must carefully approve their hearts to God, that they have no other ends in so doing, but their own sound edification onely, and that they go to another Pastor onely because they find, they can profit more in knowledg or Faith or Sanctification, than by their own, they complain that many Christians make choice of, and applaud, and admire some particular teachers without any judgment or discretion. That some admire another Pastor rather then their own, because he makes more ostentation of eloquence, or reading, or learning, or such like humane gifts. As the Corinthians did, preferring other teachers before St. Paul himself, because he was rude in speech. (2) & 2 Cor. 10.
And some onely leave their own Pastors
^{5,6.} to go to others for variety sake, they have itching ears, and so must have a heap of ^{a 2 Tim. 4.} teachers (a), one teacher (let him have never such excellent gifts) cannot please them long. And some prefers others before their own, Pastors, onely because they shew more seeming zeal in their voice, and gesture, and Phrase of speech, and manner of delivery, though perhaps their teaching
be

be nothing so powerful, wholesome or fit to edifie their consciences, as is the Doctrine of their own Pastor. These and other particulars they complain of which shewes that people are fickle and giddy headed and leave their own Pastors for want of knowledge and judgment. So that whoever they be that leave them, must be sure to approve themselves to that God that searcheth the heart, that they do it not for any other endor upon any other account, but for better edification. Nay the Authors urge, that when a man leaves his own Pastor go to another, though he doth it in uprightness of heart, onely in a desire to edifie himself, yet must he seek to do it with his own Pastors good leave and consent, & why? It is his unquestioned duty to acknowledge that by the ordinance of God he owes duty to him as to his superior in things belonging to the soul. (b) Know them that labour among you, and are overseers in the Lord and admonish you: and esteem them very bightly in love for their work sake. Nay, he is bound to seek his Pastors comfort and give him all good encouragement, that he may do the work of his ministry with joy & cheerfulness according to the Apostles rule. Obey them that have the rule over you and submit your

6 Thes. 5.ii.

c Heb. 13.17

your selves, for they watch for your souls, as
they that must give an account, that they may
do it with joy & not with grief for that is un-
profitable for you. See here what one of the best
presbyterian Guides that ever this Church
had, delivereth as sound Doctrine; & oppose
these particulars to Mr. Baxters late answer
of Toleration not to abuse: a book wherein
are many strange & ill digested conceits in
my poor judgment, and the pretences of
other Setters up of private assemblies: and
see if they can have consistence and agree-
ment: and observe that while this Pious
Author allows mens going to another Pa-
stor than their own for better edification,
yet doth he evidently understand the settled
Pastor of a neighbour Church, which makes
the case quite different from mens present
forsaking their own Pastors, to hear unset-
tled, intruding preachers, who whether
they be lawfully called to that holy func-
tion, I am confident thousands are utterly
ignorant, nor have any good grounds to
think it. So that for as much as even these
sober dissenters, which did plead for, or at
all allowed mens ordinary leaving their
own Pastors, to go to another, have yet al-
lowed it with such cautions as these, that
men must do it for no by end, but for their
careful

better edification onely and must be very careful it be not for want of judgment in their choice, and it must be with their own Pastors consent, and as acknowledging his superiority, over them, and their obligation unto him, and as seeking his joy, and comfort, and encouragement, and for as much as this their allowance, was only with relation to settled Pastors ; and if a man should not, but with such caution leave the Pastor of his own Church, to hear the Pastor of another Church, much less may he to hear an unknown, novel, corner intruder.(d) By this it appears how tender and nice a good conscience should be to do it, and what a horrible guilt of transgreſſing the very ordnance of God, there lyes upon the consciences of most that forsake the assemblies, out of dislike of their own Pastours, and go to others : which particulers being so clearly laid down I come to shew how groundlesſ these mens usual complaints of their own Pastors are. And that in these following Objections.

Obj. 1. Concerning his life. It is lewd or Scandalous, so as they cannot look for benefit by his ministry.

Obj. 2. His opinion it is dangerous, so as they feare to be perverted by him.

Obj. 3.

*vide in
Hildersham
on John 4,
32. page 342*

Object. 3. His gifts they are mean, so as they cannot hope for much good by him.

Object. 4. His carriage it is indiscreet or intollerable, and not to be indured.

It is indeed the weightiest prejudice many have against their Pastors, so as to forsake the assembly for his sake, when they can justly pretend his life is lewd or scandalous, and would you have us then bound up to his minstry whose example is enough to undo us? must we needs hear him who hears not himself? must he guide us to heaven, who walks himself in the in the paths of hell? how can we credit his words who shews his own unbelief by his wicked life? who confutes his sermons, by his practices? who pulls down with his life, what he builds up with his lips? will the Spirit lodge in his lips, in whose heart he hath no room? will the holy God make use of a prophane instrument? who can gather grapes of Thorns or figs of Thistles? how can we be bound to hear him, whose life is so lewd, or if we hear him what benefit can we hope for from him?

A^s. confess it is the most grievous complaint

complaint this, that can be if it be just. A wicked minister being of all men most odious and abominable. If the salt hath lost its savor it is good for nothing but the dunghill, if the light of the world be darkness how great is that darkness. The *Torah* and *Thummim*, Purity of Doctrine and exemplarity of life are the two great requisites in a Faithful minister of Christ, far be it from me to patronize or plead for any in whom there is a notorious defect of these, any such enemy of Christ, or *Judas* like traitor to Christ, as every scandalous minister is. But yet may I oppose to this prejudice these necessary considerations.

1. From such the purest Church upon earth cannot be free. And that,

2. By reason of that innate corruption that is in ministers as well as in other men. Alas, they are but flesh, tempered of the same clay with others, polluted with the same original corruptions, prone to the same vices, being Angels by office yet men by nature? to whom though God hath committed the heavenly treasure, yet are these but earthly vessels still, as frail and weak as other men. And,

2. Being as prone to sin as others, their temptations are far more then other mens. For Satan the common adversary of all souls knows his greatest advantage is in devouring those that should save mens souls. As the Syrians was commanded to fight especially against the King of *Israel*: So do the devils chiefly combate with the Priests and Prophets of *Israel*. The pulling down of these pillars is to weaken or raise the whole building, the misleading of these guides is the way to make all to err. The smiting of the shepheard is to scatter the flock, to lull a sleep these watchmen is the way to surprise the whole army. Its Satans compendious way of destruction to prevent those that should convert others, to deform those that should reform others, so that they being as weak as others, and Satan grudging no pains continually to assault them, is it any wonder if they be after foiled? from such therefore the purest Church on earth cannot be free.

2. When thy own Pastor is such, yet hast thou reason to hear him, and no reason to forsake the publick assemblies for his lewdness like. The heathen *Seneca* could advise me: *non quia loquitur, sed quid,* not

so much to weigh who speaks as the matter
spoken, and the Scripture warneth them not
 • **Jude 16.** to have mens persons in admiration, (e) nor
 to have the Faith of God with respect of per-
 sons. (f) Though an Angel from Heaven
 should bring an untruth, declare ano-
 ther Gospel, we ought to give no ear to him,
 let him be accursed (g) and though a devil
 from Hell should utter a truth, it is not to
 be rejected for his sake that speaks it. Truth
 is Gods where ever it grows. As a
 mine of God or silver is the Princes in
 whose ground soever it be found. It must
 be received for the love thereof, as truth,
 and for his sake who is the God of Truth,
 by whom soever it be spoken. *Moses* learnt
 of the Heathen, *Jethro* his Father in
 Law, a plat-form, for the ordering the ma-
 gistracy of *Israel*, (h) *Pharaoh* learnt of
 his prisoner *Joseph* how to prevent a fa-
 mine in Egypt. (i) *Naaman* was instruct-
 led by his captive *Damose*, where he might
 k **2 Kings 5.** get his Leprousy healed. (k) Old *Eli* was
 l **1 Sam. 1.** taught by the Child *Samuel*: (l) *Balaam* by
 his very Ass. It is true the liquor often
 tastes of the Cask, and the preachers per-
 sonal looseness, may much weaken his
 strongest persuasions. Yet,
 3. Consider by our Saviours parable,

it appears the ineffectualness of Gods word most what proceeds from the hearts own corruptions his unpreparedness, negligence, or obstinate wickedness, the fault is not so much in the seed or sower, as in the soil, the ground, that is either rocky, or thorny, or high way side ; if it be Gods word it is good seed ever, and the Minister is but an Instrument, God is the principal Agent to make it fruitful. Paul plants and Apollo waters but God by his Spirit gives the increase. Now

4. Gods Spirit which breatheth where it listeth, accompanies sometimes not his holiest ministers with his saving operations, and sometimes he worketh by the lewdest of them. Thence our Saviours admonition (a) the Scribes and Pharisees ^{a Mat. 23.3} (those wicked hypocrites) they sit in Moses chair, all therefore what ever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not after their works, for they say and do not. If there had been no good to be reaped by them because of their personal wickedness, Christ would never have injoyed them to hear them. Had Saint Paul supposed that the Spirit of love would by no means concur with those envious ones that preached Christ, to increase his bonds,

*he would not have rejoiced that they
preached him.* (b) Nay, he supposeth, that
^{16.} it were possible, for a very cast away to be
an instrument of others salvation, when
he said *I keep under my body, lest when I
have preached unto others, I my self should
be a cast away,* (c)

c 1 Cor. 9. 27. Consider, gifts may be where grace
is not, edifying gifts for others benefits in
him, who hath no sanctifying grace for his
own. *Judas had gifts fit for the Aposto-*
lical function; those that came to Christ
could say, *Lord we have prophesied in thy
name, and in thy name have cast out devils.*
the Scribes and Pharisees were learned men.
As a lame man may with his crutch point
out the right way to others, which he is
not able to walk himself, and a crooked
Taylor may make a suit fit for a strait bo-
dy, which cannot fit himself. And as
wicked *Balaam* could make a clear prophe-
d Num. 24. cy of Christ (d), so may many edifie o-
thers, that are themselves unsanctified:
many have gone loaden with gifts to
hell, God may use his talents to convert
others, that is himself a stranger to the
works of grace and conversion; if man
have a competency of edifying gifts, ap-
proved by the Church, and so be lawfu-
ly

Iy called to the ministry , it concerns not us, that he want an effectual calling as a Christian : we are to look to his call as a minister, not to his call as a Christian : for should the people stand upon their Pastors inward calling to grace, they could never hear any in Faith ; for how could they be ever certain of his effectual inward call, which is known to God alone ; the fairest shew may be but Hypocrify, but the Lord alone knows them that are his(e); if then thy minister be lawfull y called, sent, ^{e2 Tim. 23}
and ordained, thou must receive him, ^{39.} *receive a Prophet in the name of a Prophet*, yea, thou may warrantably hope for a blessing from him though a wicked man. Why,

6. Because Gods ordinance , and his promised blessing upon it, depends not on mans, the instruments, holynes or wickedness. The promise is suspended upon no such condition, and will you bind God, where he hath not bound himself. May not waters make a Garden fruitful light. ing upon a fit soile though conveyed by a Pipe of lead or wood, which gets no good it self by all the waters it conveys ; may not good seed cast isto a good soil yield a good increase, though sown by unwashen hands ? had *Elias* refused meat from the

Ravens mouth, might not he have justly Starved ? will a noble man refuse his pardon, because a mean peasant brings it from the King ? the Papists may as well suspend the benefits of the Sacrament on the worthyness or intention of the minister, as we suspend the benefit of the word on the same, yet this we hold ridiculous and impious in the one, and why not in the other ? if then the purest Church cannot be wholly free from wicked Ministers, and if thy Pastor be such, yet hast thou reason to hear him : and not refuse truth from his mouth ; and the fault of the words ineffectualness is most what in the soil, and the spirit being a free agent often accompanieth the lewdist Ministers, and edifying gifts may be where sanctifying grace is not ; and the ordinance is not suspended on the worth of the instrument, but only on the power and goodness of God whose it is, then is this prejudice no sufficient ground for men to forsake the publick assemblies for the Pastors sake, though he be loose, or wicked in his life. In this case indeed it becomes Christians to be modest, and not to be apt to speak evil of him, as the manner is ; should our tryal be at the peoples tribunal, I doubt
very

very few Ministers would escape condemnation, but some or other fault would be found, as who is free? and that so aggravated, our moats made beams, our mole hills mountains, that every one of us would find a censure severe enough, for either Lewd, or debaucht, or covetuous, or contentious or Idle, there is not a Pastor in all Gods Church, but he would have somewhat found a miss in him, and he must with the Apostle expect to pass through evil as well as good report, through hard censures, and bitter revilings in this divided and corrupted age; but you brethren, I hope you lo otherwise learn Christ, do not like cursed Cham; uncover your fathers nakedness, do not make your Pastors fault your cup talke, or his infirmities your pastime to rip them up or blazen them, rather pity them, as being inclined to the same corruptions with others, and exposed to a thousand more temptations, and pray for him: and by no means shut your ears against Gods word in his mouth. Look upon him as an instrument only by whom the spirit may work. *si bene vixerit proprium lucrum, si bene dixerit tuum tolle quod tuum,* saith St. Ambro. If he live well it is Gods work and

his gain, if he speak well it is thy advantage, take what is thine and be thankful. As for his wicked actions, those happen through the devils malice and his frailty, curse the devil, but pity the sinner and pray for him, who is like to answer for it to his Judge, to stand or fall to his Master, but for his holy doctrine that is thy portion; refuse not to hear it, consider it, meditate of it, and practice it: So shall God bless it to thee, though it come from the lewdest Minister whatsoever: Else rejecting of it, thou must answer for it and be judged by it at the last day. That for the first motive, for this forsaking the assemblies, which, you see, is groundlesse, the prejudice men have to their Pastor concerning his life.

Obj. 2. Concerning his opinion. For so will some say would you have us bound to hear him who is popishly affected, or the next door, strict in the Law, too canonical, nay, we fear superstitious, and so may mix the childrens bread with poison and mislead us out of the right way; is it not dangerous to hear him.

Ausw. To this I oppose these considerations, was not *Elias*, *Feremy*, *John Baptist*, *Saint Paul*, and our blessed Saviour (who

(who spake as never man spake) accounted pestilent fellows, ring leaders of Sects, troublers of State, Deceivers of the people? how should these instances warn you of slandering your Pastor causelessly, or concluding him erronious upon the malicious heat fayes or surmises of those that are not able to judge of the doctrine, whether it be of God or no. Yet suppose he be erronious, then must you consider of what Nature his error is, for though all truths be pretious, yet are truths of different natures, some essential fundamental points, *de Fide*, of the faith once delivered to the Saints; some circumstantial, ceremonial, indifferent; some are perspicuously revealed in the Scriptures, wherein errors are damnable, some are more darkly revealed, of which wise and holy men in all ages have doubted; now if it be onely in circumstantial and less necessary truths, where in you dislike your Pastors opinions, then must not this difference of opinion, beget in you any heart burning, or alienation of affection, though you do *discentire*, think diversly, yet ought you not *discordare*, disagree, they that unwillingly differ in judgment, ought yet to be one in heart. The Spirit of God is promised to lead all his

chosen into all necessary truths, but not to all less essential dissentions have in all ages been between great Clerks and holy Saints; contentions have even through Satans craft been cherished in the Church, they are apt to disagree on earth that shall meet in the same heaven. What remaines then but that love be still kept on foot, and we all endeavour to avoid bitterness of contention about these things? to follow the truth in love. As in building *Solomons* Temple there was no noise heard
f 2 Kings 6. of Ax or hammer (f); So in the spiritual building of the Church we should not let any sound of contention be heard among us, such is the duty of both Pastor and people; especially it is the peoples duty to be so a ware of Satans stratagems, which is to divide them from their Pastor, if it be possible, as not to entertain any needless jealousies or evil surmisings, judge cautiously of your minister, if possible, Search the *Scriptures* as the *Bereans* did to see if what he delivers be agreeable to Gods word, and if you find of a truth, that he and you differ in opinion in things less necessary and material, your care must be to pare the **Apple** and leave the worm, and that which is eaten by it, take the good and leave

Leave the bad, which directions being sound and wholesome, if they be observed; it will naturally follow that this is no sufficient ground neither, for any to leave our Church assemblies, for any prejudice men have against their Pastors opinion.

Qbj. 3: The third prejudice is against their gifts, alafs will some say our Minister though he be good and orthodox, yet is he a very mean preacher: he is no Body for gifts, where such or such come in comparisons. His knowledge shallow, how can he enlighten us? he is no Orator, how can he work on our affections? or perswade us? what good can we expect from his dry, sapless, weak Sermons? or why should we be bound to hear him, when we may have better, by whom we may profit more, to this I oppose these considerations.

Ans^r. I. There may be in Ministers great difference of gifts, without any in equality at all, for which the one should be preferred before the other. For he who is inferior to him thou admires, in one kind, may excell in another, perhaps in a kind more useful and benefical. The gifts of God to his Church are dispenced in a marvellous great variety, so that there are

are scarce any two ministers but they differ in their gifts (*g*). There are diversity of gifts but the same Spirit. In the Body natural the eye seeth better, but the tongue uttereth better, if the whole body were eye what would it do for a tongue, Saint Paul had more learning and knowledge (*h*), being at Lystra stiled for his utterance Mercury or chief speaker (*i*); yet was not of that excellent presence as other Apostles were, Barnabas in comforting the afflicted excelled him, being therefore stiled the son of Consolation (*k*). John Baptist was excellent in terrifying secure sinners, (*l*) he came in the spirit and power of Elias, but our Saviour was milder, not breaking the bruised reed nor quenching the smoking flax (*m*). In liklyhood Peter did in some gifts excell the rest, to whom Christ gave in special charge to feed his Lambs (*n*). Yet in powerful reproving of sin and denouncing Gods judgments, James and John excelled him, being therefore styled Boanerges, Sons of thunder, so in the great diversity of his gifts, that is amongst ministers, yet each of them excelleth in their kind, one may have deeper matter, another a more eloquent mouth; one may be sweeter in comfort, another more power.

1 Cor. 12: 14.

6 Cor. 11: b

14: 15.

4: 36.

1 Luk. 12:

17.

Mat. 12: 20.

21: 15.

powerful in reproof ; one may be grace-
ful in pulpit , another in private con-
ference ; one may be excellent in inter-
preting to increase knowledge, another in
application to breed good affections in
men (o). To one is given a word of wis-
dom by the Spirit , to another the utter-^{o 1 Cor. 12. 8.}
ance of knowledge by the same Spirit, one
may excel in this gift, another in that, none
in all. Now,

2. Consider this is the Lords doing,
for the beauty and benefit of his Church :
their different education, dilligence, or in-
dustry, is not all the cause of this diversi-
ty of gifts though it be one, Gods gift be-
ing now to be acquired in the use of these
means, whence St. Pauls injunction to Ti-
mothy (p) give attendance to reading, &c. ^{P Tim 4.}
But it comes chiefly from Gods free dis-
position, ^{3.} who distributed to every man seve-
rally, as he will (q). And this

3. Makes much for Gods glory , and
the benefit and beauty of his Church.
For Gods glory, for the greatness of his
wisdom and freedome of his grace shineth
in this difference perspicuously, and for the
Churches beauty and benefit: for flowers of
divers bigness for colour and smell, do
adorn a feild exceedingly with it's par-
^{q 1 Cor. 12. 11.}
ty

ty coloured coat, difference of voice, base, treble, tenor, and counter tenor, and difference of strings in an Instrument tuned by a skilful Musician, make the musick more melodious. So is difference of gifts an ornament to Gods Church. Yea, it is suitable to the peoples disposition. For as in the use of ordinary food, all have not the same appetite, nor like the same meat; hence God hath provided variety of creatures to fit every one, such is his Infinite goodness to us; so in the Church, one people may profit most by one mans gifts, another by anothers. God hath different works, and therefore provides different workmen; nay, the same person may profit best in knowledge by one Minister, in memory by another, and in affection by another. In some audiences great and eloquent schollars are fittest, in others such as can speak to the capacity of babes and ideots. Johns gifts was meetest for some mens disposition, he was an austere man, and came neither eating nor drinking; our Saviours fittest for others (q). He suited himself to publicans and sinners. Nay, as this diversity may suit to different dispositions, So doth it serve to increase love and unity amongst the servants of God, as letting you see they

^qMat. xi. 17.
19.

they have need one of another, and so causeth them mutually to esteem each other. *The eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of thee, nor the head to the feet I have no need of you.* Thus doth it tend both to Gods glory, and exceedingly to the Churches beauty and benefit.

4. Consider his ministry, whom thou accountest meanest of, is Gods ordinance, as well as others to whom in gifts he is inferior (r). *The Lord gave to one of his servants five talents, and to another but two, and to another but one, and he that had but two talents and gained other two with them, had the commendation of a good and faithful servant, as well as he that received five and gained five.* There was a great difference between Paul and Timothy, the one aged the other a youth, the one profound, famous for labours, and success in the Gospel, the other not heard of yet, yet see what Paul saith of him (s). *If Timothy come see he may be with you without fear,* (take heed you wrong him not, disgrace him not, see that you love and reverence him) for he worketh the work of God, as I also do? let no man therefore despise him, Timothy was ordained a Minister and therefore they was not to despise but reverence him

<sup>s 1 Cor. 12
21.</sup>

^{r Mat. 25, 15}

<sup>s 2 Cor. 6
10, 11.</sup>

him, as if Paul himself was with them, because he was Gods ordinance, and did the work of God as well as he. Suitable is that exhortation concerning other

* Thes. 5. Ministers. (t). *Have them in singular love for*

^{13.} *their works sake.* The feet of all that bring the glad tidings of peace must be beautiful in our eyes. And on the other hand the contempt done to the meanest of Gods ser-

* Luke. 10. servants, reacheth to God himself (u). *He
16. that despiseth you despiseth me.*

5. Consider Gods word should be received not for his sake that brings it, but for his sake whose it is. Hence the Scribes and Pharisees sitting in *Moses* his chair, and teaching *Moses* his doctrine, were to be respected though they were wicked Hypocrites. Gold and Silver is not of more value, out of an imbroydered cup then a leatherne purse, meat is as pleasing to the palate, as wholsome to the body, out of a clean earthen vessel, as out of a silver Platter, as a candle shines as bright in a wooden, as in a Golden candlestick: why should Gods word then, better worth than thousands of Gold and silver, be less valued, or the heavenly Manna be disrelished, or the light of our paths be obscured, by the meanness of the ministers that brings its

Gods

Gods word is the same, of the same intrinsick worth, who ever the minister be, and so should be esteemed and received by us, who ever thy Pastor be, if he be a true minister of Christ, and have sufficient gifts, to qualifie him for the ministry, then mayest thou doubtless, profit by him, if the fault be not in thy self (x). *The manifestation of the Spirit is* ^{1 Cor. 12.} *given to every man to profit withal,* ^{an}₂^o *ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted* (y). The best ^{1 Cor. 14.} Christian that is may profit by the meanest ^{31. 2} of Gods servants. Even Saint Paul professed that this was one cause why he so earnestly desired to come to the Romans, that he might receive some good, some increase of Faith even from them (z). And I am per- ^{Rom. 1.} swaded there is never a Minister that is ^{12.} of the most excellent gifts (if he have a godly heart) but he can truly say that he never heard any faithful Minister in all his life, even the meanest, but he could discern some gifts in him, wanting in himself, and received some profit by him, saith Mr. Hilderham.

6. The fruit and profit, that is to be received by the ministry, depends not only or chiefly on the gifts of the Preacher
but

but on the blessing of God upon his own ordinance; for Ministers are but Ministers by whom we believe, and God for his own Glory may give that blessing to the more unworthyest, he denies to the most excellent, that the glory may be intirely his own, and that his strength may the more appear in the Ministers weakness. He sometimes causeth that which the world counts foolishness, to confound the wise, and the weaker to exceed the stronger, in efficacy and profitableness. Saint Peter did convert more at one sermon than Christ himself, probably did in all his life, who is Paul who is Apollo? saith the Apostle, but Ministers in whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. *I have planted and Apollo watered, but God gave the increase.* Such is the peoples duty then to depend upon God, for his blessing in his ordinance, rather than upon the gifts of the teacher. I may allude to that (b). In Eccl. 11.6. *the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that,* so do thou hear one of Gods servants as well as another, at one time as well as at another, for thou knowst not by whose ministry it is, nor what sermon it is, by which

*b 1 Cor. 3.
5, 6, 7, 8.*

which God will be pleased to work upon thy heart. Indeed on the other hand it is not possible thou shouldest profit by thy Pastors ministration, if thou attend not, or attend with prejudice, or without reverence unto, or delight in it, nor acknowledging Gods ordinance in it, or nor seeking Gods blessing upon it. If then there may be a great difference in Ministers gifts without inequality, if he whom thou thinkest meanest may excel in his kind, if the difference be from the Lord, and that in order to his own glory, and the Churches beauty and benefit, and the meanest be Gods ordinance as well as the best, and the word be to be esteemed for its own worth, and his sake whose it is, who ever be the minister publishing it. If thou may profit by the meanest, if the fault be not thy own, and the profit depends not on his gifts, but Gods blessing. Then though thou may rightly covet the best gifts, and bless God for them when thou enjoyest them, yet mayest thou not despise the meanest of Gods Ministers nor despair of profit by him. Nor is this then a sufficient plea for forsaking the publick assemblies, the Pastors defects in gifts.

4. The last prejudice is from his carriage
Q.

riage supposed to be indiscreet perhaps intollerable. Its true will some say our Ministers life is good, his opinions Orthodox, and his gifts excellent, but he behaves himself strangely in his place. Either he is alwayes chiding, and reprobating us, A meer *Buanerges*, a son of thunder, telling us oft of Hell and Damnation, as *Ahab* said of *Micaiah*, prophecying concerning him ever evil, no good. This made *Fælix* distaste *St. Paul*, when he preached of temperance before him and *Drusilla*, who was most unchast, and of judgment before him an unjust judge ; or perhaps he is ridged in keeping us to Church orders : he will not bear with us in what he dislikes though it were his prudence to pass by. To this loppose several considerations. I confess there may be indiscretion in the best Pastors. Its a difficult thing both to please men in wisdom, and yet to save, and not betray their soules in faithfulness. Yet on the other hand it is ordinary for people to blame them that are faithful, for their faithfulness, under the notion of indiscretion. Remember Gods strict injunction to those watchmen of *Israel*, to cry aloud and not to spare, to warn men from the Lord in every evil

vil course , and that under pain of being guilty of the blood of their souls, that mis-
carry by their negligence. And if you con-
sider this, how can you wonder if they be
very tender of suffering any sin to lie upon
you they observe unreproved, unreformed,
if they fear Gods displeasure more then
mans, and take heed least that you call
discretion be not nicknamed so, being in
truth Laodicean Lukewarmness or want
of Zeal. Do but in the next place survey
the generality of people in these dayes,
how dull of hearing are some, how fro-
ward and untoward others, how nicely
Hipopritical and tickle others, and how
secure others , and it will seem almost
impossible for a faithful Pastor to work
on you to reformation, unless they speak
more then discretion and modesty would
almost permit.

Consider also if it be not better, the
people be not reproved and kept awake, and
at last saved through the Pastors reproofs
and corrections , however deemed indis-
creet, then muzzled in their sins. Is it
not better a wholesome though smarting
plaister be laid on, where need is, than
that corruption should fester? doth not
more souls perish by the Ministers luke-

warme coldness then indiscretion? better are the faithful words of a friend, than the deceitful kisses of an enemy. It is blessed thunder if it do but awake men out of their sins, you are much more beholden to your Pastor for his plain dealing, and honest hearted reproofs, in faithfulness to God, and your souls, than if he should flatter you in your sins with *placentia* speaking pleasant things. All which particulars duly considered, do shew how groundless mens forsaking the assemblies is also, because of the prejudice they too often cherish against his carriages and indiscretion. Truth is, what ever men pretend, the root of all is secret malice against the Church ministry, bread and nourished in their hearts, or at least want of love, malice cannot judge well of any thing, that comes from him a man loves not, perverts his meaning, construes wrong all his words and actions, suckes poysen from that from which a diligent Bee would draw the sweetest honey; in these dayes malice between Pastors and People flames out hot, or at least love is cold, and we know Christ had his Apostles look for this entertainment in the world: and so we need not think it strange, concerning this fiery tryal. He
bad

bad them expect to be reviled and persecuted, and have all manner of evil spoken of them, telling them the Prophets of old had been so used before them (a). And ^{a Mat. 5. 10.} Saint Paul saith of himself and his fellows ^{b 12.} that they found their Masters words true by experience, for they were reviled, persecuted, defamed, accounted the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things (b). And when God opened to him ^{b Cor. 4. 12.} at Ephesus a large and effectual door. That is, blessed his ministry mightily, and gave it enterance into the hearts of men. Yet were there many adversaries raised up against him (c). Nay, it is made a kinde ^{c 1 Cor. 6. 9.} of marke of an unfaithful Minister not to be thus used (d). *Wo to you when all men* ^{d Luke. 6. 26.} *speak well of you, for so did your father of the false Prophets* (e). *If I yet pleased men,* ^{e Gal. 1. 10.} *I should not be the servant of Christ,* the reason is, what ever men pretend, it is a Ministers fidelity, and plainness, and boldness in reproving mens sins; that's the prime cause of their hatred and malice against them; when Jeremy complained every one did curse him, though he had neither lent nor borrowed upon usury, he hints the cause in the next words, that he was a man of strife and contention with

*f*Jer. 15.10. the whole earth (f). Ahab hated Michaiah,
 because he prophecyed not good concerning
*g*Kings 22. him, but evill (g). The two witnesses did
 vex and torment men by their ministry
*h*Re. 11. (h). Indeed this evil made Moses, Jeremy
 10. and Jonah to find out so many excuses;
 as fearing to enter upon this so hateful,
 and thankless a calling, and it tempts many
 good Ministers either to give over the
 calling, if they can live without it, or at
 least to be unfaithful in performing it, as
 breeding them so much hatred, and dis-
 pleasure with men. *I said*, saith Jeremy,
*i*Jer. 20. 9. *(i) I will not make mention of him, nor speak
 any more of his name: but his word was in my
 heart as burning fire shut up in my bones,
 and I was weary with forbearing, I could not
 stay.*

Now for a remedy of this disease, oh that people would consider, that near relation they stand in, and that dear affection they owe to their Minister, they are their fathers spiritual fathers begetting them to Christ. Pastors, Shepheards, Watch-men, such as must give an account. That they would consider the strict command of God for love: hence under the Law the Priest was to carry in his garments the names of the twelve Tribes on his boulders, to signify the

the weighty burden he undertook ; and in his breast plate, to shew his entire affection unto them , and this affection it is , that maketh Ministers faithful in their office to watch over their souls unweariedly, to spend and to be spent , to win them to Christ. And so in spiritual regeneration, as in natural regeneration, it is love that begets Children unto Christ. And on the other hand the people should be as careful of love to their Ministers.

Saint Paul records of the Galatians (k) That they would have pluckt out their very eyes to have given them unto him , far short of the Galatians are those that muzzle the mouths of the oxen that should tread out the corne. That abridge the hire of the labourer, and withhold the Churches right. The Galatians was willing to forsake the dearest things they had in the world, their very eyes, if not their life for the Gospels sake, and its ministry (l). Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. So I say consider what love is commanded by God from Ministers to their people, and people to their Ministers. But on the other hand see from whence all variance betwixt them comes, even from the Devils

craft, and malice, for no way hath he more effectual, to hinder the efficacy of the word then this. His five thousand years experience hath taught him that it is to little purpose to mutter a syllable directly against Gods word, he sees no likelyhood to begot in Christians, especially in Protestants, a direct hatred of the word as such. His policy then directs him to work obliquely, to distil into mens hearts a hatred of their Ministers, so to make them set at naught the word they preach. This is the devils craft. Now consider lastly how unreasonable this is, what is the matter? Is there some petty quarrel betwixt you? wipe it of, are there some occasions of disaffections? look it be not causless, as for the most part they are. Do they reprove your sins, drunkenness or sacrilege, or perjury, or rebellions, or profanations of Gods day or the like. Alas, they would not do it but in love to your souls, they would have your good will, and gladly be beloved of you if they durst forbear, to please you, but necessity lies upon them to cry a loud and not to spare to tell *Judah* of her sins, and *Israel* of her abominations, should you not then rather love then hate them for this? and say

say let the righteous smite me and it shall be a kindness, for faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful (m). All these considerations do bid you ^{mProv. 27.} 6. shake off anger, envy and despight by all means, not to entertain the least seed thereof. No evil reports, no Idle accusations against your Pastor (n). But rather to ^{nTim. 5. 19.} pray for them to God, to deliver them from unreasonable men (o). And as St. Paul speaks of Epaphroditus to receive them ^{o2 Thes. 3.1.} in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such ^{pPhil. 2.29.} in reputation (p). Laying aside all malice and guile and evil speaking, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby, and then I dare say you will find no cause of forsaking the publick assemblies of the Church for your Pastors sake which was the second grand motive we propounded to consider, why, men are willful to forsake our Church assemblies as the manner of some is. Besides these two grand occasions of forsaking the assemblies, there be others we need not speak so largely of, because being but named, they cannot but be abhorred, and being seen they discover their own nakedness, such are these following.

I. Some

1. Some forsake the assemblies and separate themselves from us out of mere Ignorance, taking offence at many things in our assemblies causelessly, or without any weighty reason, they do not and are not able to distinguish between the essentials and circumstantial in Religion, and so look upon any supposed mistake in the latter, with detestation proper only to the perversion of the former, and thence violate charity, and break communion with those that hold the same faith with them. These eager Spirits having a zeal without knowledg, blow up minute differences, with lasting contentions. They raise disputes about a pin, or a nail of the Temple, that even endangers the whole fabrick, they set the same value upon the leaves and bark of the tree, as upon the fruit it self, they make ado about a nail, or tile of the house, as if it were of the same concernment with a pillar or a beam, they look upon that as simply evil, which is onely so in some respects, as it is wrong circumstantiated, or which is onely not perfect in all degrees, whereas did but men deliberately prize that which they oppose, and proportion their displeasure to the just weight thereof,

their

their contentions would soon be calmed, and never become quarrells with the Church of God. Nay indeed in many it is meet sottish Ignorance, that is the cause of their forsaking the assemblies of the Church of God, they was never ground-ed in the first principles of the Oracles of God, and especially they would never learn their obligation to the Church they was baptized in, to hold communion with it. Perhaps these men will say they would fain do right and go the right way but they would never hearken to their right guides, but gave their ears first to seduc-^rers, being a little too much affected with that shew of piety they saw in them, they put themselves wholy upon their di-rections and examp'les, and so are carri-ed hoodwinckt or blindfold into Schisms and damnable errors. Thousands there be that have separated themselves that are meet Ignorants, silly women especially, *that was alwaies learning but never came to the knowledg of the truth*, having better affections than principles; whom, because they would not receive the truth in the love thereof, God hath given up to strong delusions to believe lies; and so in some, that's one cause of their forsake-ing,

ing the assemblies, meet Ignorance.

2. This Ignorance is oftentimes proud or conceited. So that's another cause, damnable pride. The wisest of men arraignes this vice as the ring-leader of divisions (*q*). *Onely by pride cometh contention.* Indeed there are few sins unto which pride is not either a parent or nurse, but above all Schism and Heresie, hath its immediate dissent from it, having so many lineaments and features of this deformed mother, as sufficiently attests its extraction.

See some of these heads very largely and learnedly discoursed of by the author of the whole duty of Man in the causes of the Decays of Christianity, to whom I here acknowledge my self much indebted. It is pride that makes some men dislike whatsoever is not of their own invention, or whatever is imposed by their superiors, or whatever others have a hand in whom they contemn or hate, be it never so good or true, or what is contrary to that they have formerly maintained : and they are loth to deny themselves, as in effect to acknowledge they was formerly in an error, and in the wrong. Its pride that make some desire, to go in some singular way, and loath to go on in a beaten tract, wherein they may be obscured in the throng : with *Theudas* they are ambitious to be some body, with *Simon Magus* to be *μέγας τύς*. Some knowing or Zealous person, they would be taken notice

tice of by their neighbours as a stricter sort of livers, and would be eminent though by the infamy of Schism or separation. To be called of men *Rabbi Rabbi*, is int chaunting musick to any Pharisee and the very essence and constitutive parts of a Schismatick is the esteem of himself and the contempt of others. I am not as this Publican, was the Pharisees voice, whose very name signifies separation, and our modern Separatists do but echo the same note, when they pronounce these Church assemblies, and the members thereof heretical or carnal, from whom they withdraw themselves, they say as those in *Esa. 65. 54*
Stand off, come not near me, for I am holier than thou. But let it be remembred this while the Pharisee lookt so fastidiently on the poor Publican, he renounc'd communion in prayers much more acceptable to God then his own, and the observation is truly applicable in our case. The Transcendant purity and Saintship and holiness, which our Separatists boasts of? being if brought to the touch but a more sublimated wickednes. And their pretence for spiritually, being onely verified in spiritual pride. By their fruits of rebellion, disobedience to, and contempt

tempt of Magistracy and Ministry , rash censures, mallice, evil speakings, and bitterness, headines, treasons, high mainnednes and the like fruits, you may know them. So this pride is another partition wall that Satan useth to divide us from God and one another , and to make men forsake the Assemblies of the Church.

3. It is the manner of some also to forsake them out of curiosity , this is that baneful weed, which the devill made shift to steal even into Paradise , which hath ever since affected the richest soils, the most pregnant understandings. I do not altogether mean that speculative curiosity about the mysterious parts of our religion, though that be a notorious mean also to propagate *Heresies* , when men will not be soberly wise, but will attempt to find out the depths of those mysteries which God hath thought fit to make secret; prying into the Ark of the secret counsells of God. But that curiosity of men which is usually about those little trifling notions, and thin aerial speculations, which do not at all tend to make men wiser to salvation. Men are not content to know those divine truths which tend

tend to Godly practice, therefore they think such preachers as insist of them, dry and insipid, and forsake them to follow those, who will offer them nicer speculations, be they never so unprofitable to the great end of Salvation (s). vide The Decays of Christianity in the causes of discontents. Besides there is another curiosity that is deep in the guilt of drawing men from the Assemblies, to which they belong. A curiosity to hear strange preachers, they have itching ears : their ordinary food do not please them, a new besome sweeps clean, an uncouth bit is for their palates, a Minister of the best gifts cannot please them long, as the Athenians were all for enquiring of news, so are these men all for novelties. In a short time, they distaste the ministry of their ordinary Pastors and so to please the distempered palates of their fickle souls, they must needs be gadding abroad, to hear every upstart Mountebank that is near them, and so this is one great reason of their forsaking their ordinary assemblies, as the manner of many is.

4. Another reason hereof is covetousness and interest, the great Idol to which the world bowes, as the Apostle saith, *they that will be rich fall into divers temptations*

tations; so do they fall into this sin among the rest. Some men will be rich, therefore out of respect to their profit, they absent themselves from the Assemblies of the Church, they must needs spend some Sabbaths in going to Fairs, or going journeys, or makeing bargains, or meeting customers, or looking to some house business, they cannot get their living, they say, by coming to Church, and when they come they must needs leave a great part of their family behind them, for some worldly advantage or other. These are like those,

Mal. 3v4. in Malachi (t) *That said it is in vain to serve the Lord, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances? And others there be in the world, that make a show of religion and piety: that have no other end in their broaching and maintaining Schisms and separations from the assemblies of the Church, then their proper advantages. They make divinity an handmaid, religion a stalking horse to a policy. Je-roboam made the Golden Calves become more venerable Deities, when he found them fit to serve his jealousies, and Matchia-wels policy, that states and persons should secure themselves of religion was a common practice, long before it was a*

rule

rule. In the Old Testament we read of mercenary Prophets that turned the office into a trade, that divined for money, and even for handfuls of Barley, and pieces of Bread. And in the New St. Paul speaks of deceivers that speak things they ought not for filthy Lucre's sake (u). Titus. 1. And the same Apostle declaiming against 11. the love of money as the root of all evil, he reproves it from its having made men erre from the faith (x). And it is St. x Tim. 6. Peters prediction, that the most damnable 11. Heresies, even the denying of the Lord that bought them, should be introduced by those, who through covetousness should make Merchandise of their Proselytes (y). 2 Pet. 2.
And is it not plain how mens tching; ears in this Age, do invite many Mountebanks in Religion, to try experiments upon them, when men Nauseate Old truths, and Old teachers because they are acquainted with them, and embrace Doctrines and broachers of them because they are new, when men love such teachers and are bountiful to none but such as they love, how can it be doubted but some will suit themselves to their disciples humours to gain money to themselves, whereby sowing tares, they can immediately,

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reap Gold ? our age hath given us sufficient experience hereof, would God that this way of devilish traffique were at an end. And doubtless as there be many leaders, so are there many Disciples in the separation, in whom covetousness, and self interest reigns exceedingly, and by it they are animated in their obstinate continuance in their erronious waies, so as to stop their ears to the charmes of sound doctrines, charme they never so wisely. Now O that such would consider, what the character of infamy is, that remaines yet upon *Achan*, that he troubled *Israel* to enrich himselfe. And on *Balaam*, that he not only loved the wayes of covetousness, but ensnared the people in uncleanness, and upon those in the Gospel, that made Gods house a house of Merchandise, and so a den of thieves. So that another ground and reason of mens forsaking, and propagating separations from our publick assemblies. **Covetousness, selfe interest.** I'le name a

¶. Even Idleness, and this both spiritual and natural, spiritual for because many men will take no paines in the practise of the duties of godliness which might well employ mens whole lives ; therefore they fall into nice and new opinions to im-

employ their active mindes. So spiritual Idleness in things in which they should be employed makes men curious, and curiosity contentious. The zeal of practise of humility, and patience, and self denial, and mortifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, and renouncing the world and the other parts of real goodness, this zeal grows cold ; and so that of disputes gets and gathers heat and vigor. Alas our good works in this age fall short of the first Christians, and then no wonder that our controversies exceeds theirs ; because we spend not our time in the one, which is irksome to flesh and blood, and therefore we employ it in hammering and forging the other. *Pharaoh* understood this well, though he applyed it ill, when he thought the *Israelites* proposals of travelling into the wilderness to their divotions, was the effect of their idleness, and so increast their tasks as the properest way to divert their design ; and as spiritual Idleness, so also natural, is often the cause of division. For as experience sheweth such men as desert or neglect their secular callings, are most apt to run after new teachers ; and with the widowes that neglected their office of Ministration, to be busibodies and in many families the

she-zealots, neglecting their proper business, the guiding of the house, have therefore run into conventicles, and upon them have seducers acted their designs most, leading captive silly women to become duck coyes to whole families, besides these there are another sort of Idle persons to, that can sit at home, lurke by their fire sides when they should be in Gods house: and though they have little or nothing to hinder them, from attending his ordinance, yet any pretence, a shouer of rain, a sore finger, an Aking head, a thin blast of weather will serve the turn to divert them. O that such would remember *Hezekiahs* example, who with in three dayes after he had been sick of a most painful and mortal disease went into ^a*Esa. 38.22.* the Temple (*a*). And the woman that on the sabbath resorted to the Synagogue, though she had a spirit of infirmity eighteen yeares (*b*). Alas the cause is, mens hearts are dead, and void of grace, and the love of God and his word, and so they find little comfort, they take no delight in his publick worship, and therefore are glad of an excuse. *David* loved Gods tabernacle well. For his heart and his flesh rejoiced for the living God (*c*). Those that tast how sweter the Lord is, will

^b*Luk. 13.
10. 11.*

^c*Psa. 84.12*

will desire the sincere milk of this word (d). O thou that art so careless whether ever thou appear in the assemblies of Gods Church in this life, thou hast cause to fear thou shall never stand in the congregation of the righteous in the life to come (e). e Psa. 1. 5. Thats a fifth cause of mens forsaking or absenting from the assemblies as the manner of many, is.

6. There is a sixth which I will name because I will miss none, and but name it, because I have spoken in effect to it before. The manner of some is to forsake them, upon pretence, they can spend their time and serve God as well, pray and read good books at home as in the Church of God. But God loves the gates of Sion more then all the dwellings of Jacob (f). David sure being both a prophet and a King could serve God as well in private as any pretenders, and he had both a prophet and a Priest with him in his banishment yet did he for all that long for the publick worship of God; bewailed the want of it exceedingly (g).

But I have fully shown you before the excellency and acceptableness of publick worship performed by Godly ministers together with his people in a publick place,

R 3 above

^dPet. 2. 2, 3

^fPsal. 87. 2.

^gPsal 84.

above any private whatsoever, that's a sufficient consideration to convince them of sin, that forsake the assemblies upon this account, as the manner of some is.

Thus have I now both discovered the evident duty of all Christians, and their obligation to frequent the publick assemblies in order to the publick worship of God, and the sin of those men, that either upon pretence of corruptions in the Church, though they acknowledg it Orthodox, and right in the substantials of religion, or of some faults in the ministers life, or opinion, or gifts, or carriage, but in truth out of malice or hatred against him, or out of pride, or curiosity, or Idleness or upon pretence they can as well serve God at home, do neglect or forsake the publique assemblies. Now what remaines but a word of exhortation, to all that have an ear to hear what Gods Spirit saith unto the Churches, and members of them.

I. I beseech you Beloved in the Lord, to learn to lay to heart your obligation to attend upon Church Assemblies: and beware of those that endeavour the divisions of the Church, or to divide and separate you from it. It's the Apost'les own earnest

ex-

exhortation, (g) now I beseech you brethren Rom. 16
 mark them which cause divisions and offences,^{17a}
 contrary to the Doctrine which you have learned,
 and avoid them. They are no lovers of
 your souls as they pretend, they are no ser-
 vants of God for your good, they are no fit
 guides for salvation, that for things meerly
 external, adiaphorous, & indifferent, matters
 of meer order or decency, separate them-
 selves from the society of a true Church,
 and would have you so to do. As if a fury-
 ous brainsick sailor should upon every occa-
 sion of anger or discontent, cast himself o-
 verboard, presuming to be safe enough out
 of the ship; the ordinary road way of Gods
 saving any soul is in the unity of the Church.
 And that is in a conjunction of them to some
 visible ordinary congregation according to
 that, (h) the Lord added to the Church such as ^{hAct. 2.47.}
 should be saved, but *exceruntè nobis*, they who
 go out from amongst us, because they was
 never of us, as to their hearts, I will not pre-
 sume to judge them as to their final state, yet
 this I'le say, that the Church being the
 Spouse of Christ, and Schism and Heresie
 being a work of the Flesh, an effect of so bad
 caules as I have shwon you fully, ranked by
 the Apostle with fornication, and drunken-
 ness, and adultery, and the like. I would

not dye in their state for all the world; take heed hereof when I beseech you.

2. But for Church Assemblies, I beseech you labour to love them and delight in them and be more thankful to God, for the liberty you have to frequent and enjoy them, than hitherto you have been. Consider the cloud of witnesses that is gone before you.

i Prov. 2. 20. Walk in the way of good men, and keep the way of the righteous. They have ever highly esteemed and diligently frequented the Assemblies of the Church. Christ's Parents being poor dwelt far off *Jerusalem*, yet did they go up every year to the passover, which was the most solemn Church Assembly, that Gods people in those dayes had. Behold a witness against them that pretend poverty for their excuse. The Apostles after Christ's ascension were continually in the Temple (*k*). And Anna the Prophetess, departed not from the Temple but served God, with prayers and fasting night and day (*l*). And the Primitive Christians continued dayly with one accord in Temple

m Acts 2. 46. Yea, our blessed Saviours custome was to the Synagogue every Sabbath day (*n*). *o Luk. 4. 16.* And did constantly go to every passover at *p Joh. 2. 13. Jerusalem* (*o*). behold what witnesses you have against those that pretend they have

knowledge

knowledge and grace enough, they have no need to go to Church, they canno profit by it, but can as well serve God at home. *Hezekiah* the King you see resolved so soon as ever he recovered to go up to the House of God (*p*). *David* loved the habitation of Gods house, and the place were his ho ^{*p* Esai. 38.} _{32.} *jour dwelt* (*q*). He counted Gods Taberna- ^{*q* Psal. 26.8.} cles amiable, his soul longed, nay sainted for them (*r*). He made it his choice to be a ^{*r* Psal. 84.} constant companion of them that feared ^{¹²} God (*s*). He was glad when they said unto ^{*Psal. 19.*} him let us go up to the House of God. Behold what witnesses you have also against those, that being great and rich, take state upon them, and think it a kind of debasement to be constant in attending Gods house and service. Let us in the fear of God follow these excellent examples, and of what ever degree we be, poor or rich, wise or learned, let us never forsake the Assemblies, or neglect them. If we do, we may easily provoke God to gives up to our own hearts lusts, or to hardness of Heart in sin, or to the delusion of Satan to believe his lies. And therefore let us prize the having opportunities of attending Gods house. Let us count it one of the greatest blessings that our candlestick is not removed, nor ^{*is*}

is there a famine of the word in our daies, nor is it persecuted, but that we may securely and openly worship God in our Churches, and Temples, and not, as our miserable fore fathers, be glad to do it in hills and holes, in Dens and Caves of the earth. Let us labour to walke worthy of this blessing while we enjoy it; and to benefit by it, lest we provoke God continually till he be weary of long suffering : and so hear length destroy his Tabernacle, as a garden, and lay wast our congregations (¹). Let it be our daily prayer for the continuance of our solemn assemblies, both here and in all places of our divided land (²). pray for the peace of Jerusalem, *They shall prosper that love thee.* Thus let us do, every one, ourselves.

^t Lam. 2:
6.

^a Psal. 122:
6.

^x Esa. 2:2.

^y ver. 3.

3. Nay, let us, according to the latter part of the verse, wherein our text is. Let us exhort one another hereunto ; let every one call upon his neighbors, and friends, and draw them to frequent the Church assemblies when the Lord had prophecied, (^x) *I hat in the dayes of the Gospel, all nations shoud flow unto the house of the Lord,* he addeth (^y) that by this means it should be done. *Many people shall*

shall go and say: come let us go up to the house of God. Especially let Masters of Families, and Parents be exhorted, not to think it sufficient to come to Gods house themselves, but see that their Children and servants come also. A Godly Christian cannot be content, that they should attend him in his house, that will not attend and go with him to Gods house (z). ^{Exod. 20.}
^{10.} you see the commandement runs that we do not onely keep the Sabbath our selves but must look that our Sons, and our Daughters, our men servants, and our maidservants, and strangers do the same. And *Joshuahs* piety runs thus. (a) *I and all* ^{Jos. 24.} my house will serve the Lord. And *David* ^{15.} saith expressly (b), *there shall no deceitful person* ^{psal. 101,} *dwell in my house*, no prophane contem- ^{7.} ner of religion. And (c) he speakes of this ^{c psal. 42.} ^{4.} as one of the greatest comforts he had on earth, *that he went with a multitude of them* *that kept holy day, and led them into the house* *of the Lord*, This if we do not, if we walke not after these excellent patterns and examples, if we do not with chearfulness go into the Lords Courts, and serve the Lord with gladness, and come before him with joyfulness; if we do not account our dayes and hours pretious that are so
be-

bestowed, if we be not forward to take all holy opportunities, redeeming our time from the world, that we may spend them in these assemblies of Gods people, if we have neither delight nor appetite to the words and Sacraments, or the duties of praise and invocation, if we be dull or lumpish, heavy and spiritless in them, if we be not much grieved to see or hear of the congregations being unfrequented or neglected; and glad to see, and quick to promote the frequency and fulness thereof. It is because we do not understand our own ^{delight} happiness in enjoying the benefit of them.

^{delight} As Christ said to the woman of *Samaria*, we do not know the gift of God (*d*). We are sottish and insensible of the greatness of that privilege we may have in waiting upon the assemblies. And therefore we are so prone to forsake the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of many is. From which grievous sin God of his infinite mercy preserve us, making us evermore to delight in his house and presence. For *Jesus Christ* his sake to whom with the father, and the Holy Ghost be ascribed all honour and glory, might, majesty, and dominion, now, and for ever more. *Amen.*



THE
NATURE and DANGER
OF
A Misguided Conscience.

Acts 26. 9.

I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.

How reverend and sacred the Authority of *Conscience* is, may be evident, partly by the ready Obsequiousness that all good men shew to its Commands; and partly by the proneness of *Impostors*, to affix the hand and seal of *Conscience*, to their counterfeit *Forgeries*; together with the readiness of men of good meanings, but ordinary understandings, to

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yield

The Nature and Danger

yield obedience to those *delusions* that come authorized with this Name. And as in all Courts (especially of great Jurisdiction) 'tis a great joy and happiness to the people, to see Order and Justice in their proceedings, and a great Burden and Misery, when it is otherwise: So it was a great happiness to man, when this great Court of Conscience was settled in due order, and is now as great a misery since it is become so many wayes corrupted.

Look how beautiful and lovely is the face of a well-ordered State, where the Prince commands with singular *Wisdom* and *Justice*, and the Subjects yield Obedience with due *Loyalty* and *Humility*; so amiable a piece was the Soul of man, when the Understanding and Conscience did govern the other faculties with *re^titude* and discretion, and the will and affections did most *readily* obey, and put in execution these rightful Dictates. And if we consider how ungrateful an Object a disordered State affords to the ages of them that view it, when either *Tyranny*, or *Folly* do usurp the place of *Sovereignty*; or else *Faction*, and *Rebellion* take place of that *Loyalty*, and Dutifulnes that should be in those that are subject: We may from thence conclude how deformed the state of mans soul is now become, since Ignorance and Error have clouded the Understanding and Conscience, where the seat of Sovereignty of right ought to be placed, and

Fro-

Frowardness and Contumacy have raised the will and sensitive Affections, to a rebellion against the commands of Reason and Conscience.

Whether of these two, the weakness of the Commanding, or the disorder of the Obeying Faculties of mans soul, be of greater mischief both to our own selves in particular, and also to the Community ; I shall not now strictly enquire or determine. But certainly, as in the Body Politick, when *delirant reges, pleguntur Achivi*, the errors of the Leaders will turn to the prejudice of the Followers ; and as in the Natural Body, an error in the first Concoction, is hardly rectified in the second : So in the Soul, an error in these leading Faculties hath a very pernicious Influence upon the Will and Affections, to the depraving and debauching of them. When mens Consciences are misguided, they will easily be induced both to an eager loving and desiring, and to an impetuous prosecuting of that which is evil, because their own mistakes and delusions do represent it as good ; and thereby offer great violence to a good Conscience, while they pretend to obey the Dictates of Conscience.

It may therefore be of very good use, to obviate this Distemper of mens minds, which is both Dangerous and Epidemical, by shewing them the causes of this disease, and something also of the Diagnosticks, which will

be a good step toward the learning of its cure. And a Discourse of this Nature and Tendency, as it is to these times, *a word in due season*; so it will be very properly grounded upon the words I have read unto you, which shew us the confession of the Apostle *Paul*, concerning his former condition, that he had been so far misguided in his Conscience, that he *verily thought with himself, that he ought* (or was bound in conscience) *to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.*

Which words are part of the Apostle *Paul* his Apologetical speech, before *Agrippa* and *Festus*. This Appearance is reckoned by those that are skilful in *Chronology*, to have been in the 57th year of our Saviour, and in the second year of *Nero's reign*, before the time that his rage against the Christians carried him forward so far as to wash his hands in their blood. *Claudius*, indeed had set out a Decree to banish all *Jews* from *Rome*, of which we read, *Act 18.2.* and there-upon *Aquila*, & *Priscilla Christian Jews*, among the rest were forced to come out of *Italy*. But this Edict did not concern them, because of their profession of *Christianity*, but because of their being of the Jewish Nation. And the late Reverend and Learned, *D. Hammond*, tells us, that in the reign of *Claudius*, *St. John* was banished into the Isle of *Patmos*, and quotes *Epiphanius* for the proof of it. But *Nero* was the first of

all

all the *Roman* Emperours, that began to persecute the Christians, as such; as the aforesnamed Authour proves from the words of *Tertullian*, *Primum Neronem in hanc Sedam gladio ferociisse*: *Nero* was the first that put men to death, for the profession of Christianity. This persecution by *Nero*, was not begun when the Apostle made this Speech; and therefore in defending himself, as he doth not shrink from the profession of Christ, for fear of shame or punishment, so he pleads *Not guilty*, as to the breach of any Law of the *Romans*, by any thing he had spoken or done; and therefore claims the privilege of a *Roman-Citizen*, notwithstanding his being a Christian, and hopes to be delivered by appealing to *Cæsar*, chap. 25. 11.

This I thought necessary to put you in mind of, that you might the more easily apprehend the purport of the Apostle's speech, and how *Agrippa* could truly say in vers. 31. 1 the end of this Chapter, that *Paul had done nothing worthy of death, or of bonds*, by the Roman Laws; though his being a Christian, was very evident by his own Confession.

Now for the substance and scope of this Speech, I shall set it before you in a few Words. After the *Preface*, vers. 2. 3. wherein he insinuates into the affections of *Agrippa*, before whom he was to plead his Cause: he sets forth the manner of his former life, vers. 5. 1 That he had been a *Pharisee*, of the strictest

Sect amongst the Jews : and that now he did not differ from his former Principles, any further than that he did believe those Promises to be already accomplished, which all the twelve Tribes did hope for, onely they were not yet convinced, that they had took effect in that Jesus whom they had put to death. Then he endeavours to perswade his hearers, both of the possibility of God having raised up Christ from the dead ; and also of the present unbelieving Jews being mistaken in that Zeal, or rather Fury, which they shewed in opposing Christ, and persecuting those that did profess his Name. And, that they might not be too confident of their being in the right, he tells them that for his own part he had been formerly of the same minde with them, and had spent much pains in opposing and persecuting those that believed in Jesus Christ, until such time as it pleased God to work in him a saving conviction of the error of the way he had been in; which he goes on in relating, in the following Verses.

So that the words of the Text, considered with reference to what goes before, are an Argument intended for the perswading of the King and the rest of the Auditory, that it was possible for the Jews to be mistaken in their zeal against Christ, seeing himself had been made sensible of his mistake in following their principles, and being zealous for them. Considered in themselves, they are

are the Apostles acknowledgement of his former mistakes, and of the misguiding of his Conscience therein: he tells us that he had not, in his unregenerate estate, persecuted Christ and his followers, out of malice, but through mistake: he did not believe him to be the *Messiah*, but an *Impostor*, and that he was bound in Conscience to do many things, even the utmost that he could, contrary to the Name and Profession of Jesus of Nazareth.

Instead of a more exact or artificial division of the Text, I shall resolve it into two Positions, which the Apostle points at herein, and of which he endeavours to convince his hearers.

1. Position, *That a mans Conscience may be so far deluded, as that he may verily think himself bound in Conscience to do that which is amiss.*

2. Position, *That this mistake or misguiding of Conscience, doth not excuse those irregularities which men run into through it.*

The consequence of these, from the scope and design of the Apostle's confession concerning himself, is so clear to every man, that seriously observes his meaning, that I shall not trouble you with spending time in making it out, but presently apply my self to the opening of the Positions in order.

1. Position, *That a mans Conscience may be so far deluded, &c.*

As for the Latin word, *Conscientia*, and our English word, *Conscience*, some give this Etymology of it: *Conscientia*, quasi *Cordis scientia*; but that seems too remote: Or, *Conscientia*, quasi *concludens scientia*, because it concludeth or passeth sentence for, or against a mans self: Or, *Conscientia* from *Con* and *Scire*, because it doth, as it were, joyn with God in seeing and taking cognizance of our ways. The Greek word is *oυειδησις*, which, as some observe, is used about thirty times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, we once meet with the word (*Madagna*) from (*Jadang*) to Know, Eccles. 10. ult. which is there translated, *Thoughts* or *Conscience*. But most commonly, that which in the New Testament is called *oυειδησις*, in the Old Testament is called
 1 Sam. (Leb) the Heart. So Davids heart is said to
 24.5. smite him, that is, his Conscience, and the
 Mal. 2. people are exhorted to lay it to heart; that
 is, to their Conscience. And sometimes
 1 Joh. 3. If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than
 20. our hearts, &c.

We have seen the *Quid nominis*. Now for the *Quid rei*: Conscience may be described thus: It is a power or faculty, of the practical part of mans Understanding, whereby we are enabled to judge, of our selves and our actions, according to the Rule of the Law of God.

In this Description there are five terms worthy our consideration.

1. The *Genus* of Conscience, is, a *Power* or *Faculty*. That Conscience cannot so properly be styled, either an *Act* or an *Habit*, I think is plain enough; and therefore it is most properly termed a *Power* or *Faculty*, wherewith God hath endowed the *Soul* of Man. But in the Scriptures, as Faith and Love are sometimes used to signify the *Habits* of those Graces, and sometimes the *exercise* of them: So Conscience is sometimes put for the *actings* or *dictates* of Conscience, as when the Apostle tells the people, That he *had lived in all good Conscience*, that ^{Acts 23:1.} is, according to the *dictates* of Conscience: sometimes for the *Power* or *Faculty* from whence these *actings* proceed, as when he saith, He had *exercised himself herein*, to have always a *Conscience void of Offence*. ^{Acts 24:16.}

2. The *Seat* of Conscience, is said to be in the *practical* part of our Understanding. It is peculiar to *understanding* Creatures, to have a Conscience; and the more clear any mans Understanding is, *ceteris paribus*, the more refined are the motions of Conscience in him. And, that Conscience is seated rather in the Understanding then in the *Will*, is evident, in that Conscience will many times do its office, though the *Will* do hang back never so much. And further, we say 'tis seated in the *practical* Understanding,
beⁿ.

because as the office of the *speculative Understanding*, is, to judge of *Truth and Error*, so the *practical* judgeth of *Good and Evil*.

3. The *Office of Conscience*, is, to judge. The judgement that Conscience passeth, may be conceived to be in such a way as this. What the Scripture approves, is good and to be followed: But the Scripture doth approve this: Therefore it is good and to be followed. What the Scripture condemns, is evil and to be avoided: But the Scripture condemns such and such courses: Therefore they are evil and to be avoided. Some Divines say, that in the *major* proposition, Conscience is *Lex*: Though I think that expression not to be very proper, because Conscience doth not lay down this Law by its own Authority, but takes it from the Word of God, yet so as to assent to the Authority of it: and in this respect Conscience is sometimes called *conscience*, because it keepeth the Law of God in our mindes. In the *Minor Proposition*, Conscience is called *Tetis*. In the *Conclusion*, *Judex*.

4. The *Object* of this Judgement, is, both *our selves* and *our actions*. Concerning *our selves*, or our own Condition towards God, Conscience passeth judgement in this sort: The Scripture saith, He that truely repenteth of his sins, and resteth by Faith upon the Merits of Jesus Christ is in the way

way to Eternal life; but he that goeth on still in his trespasses obstinately and securely, is in the broad way that leads to the Chambers of death. Now accordingly as Conscience findes our Condition to be, either penitent or impenitent, so it pronounceth us to be either in a good or bad way. Concerning our *actions* Conscience passeth Sentence, partly before we enter upon them; and as it findes them either agreeing with, or contrary to the will of God, so it either encourageth us to them, or dissuades us from them: partly afterward, and then by the same rule of the agreeing of our actions to the Will of God, or opposing of it, so Conscience doth either accuse or excuse and commend us for what we have done.

5. The Rule by which Conscience ought to proceed in judging of our Persons and Actions, is, the *Law of God*. This Law is either that which was written upon mans heart, which though sadly defaced by the Fall, yet some remainders of it are to be found in all men, and according to this the Heathen that know no other Law, are to Rom.2. judge of their actions: or else that which is 14, 15. written in the Holy *Scriptures*, and according to this all of us should judge our selves and our actions. It will not be sufficient that our Consciences speak peace to us, and tell us that our actions are good, and our selves in a good estate, except this judgement of Conscience be grounded upon the Word

The Nature and Danger

Word of God. For if we hold Conscience to be the *supream Judge*, and that we are to attend wholly to it, without looking to any other Rule, hence will follow a two-fold *absurdity*. 1. Hence it will follow, that Conscience is *infallible*: and so those that bestow so much Zeal in crying out against one *Antichrist*, will set up many *Infallibles* in his stead, even as many as be of this *Opinion*. But, that Conscience is not infallible, may be evident by this, that one mans Conscience doth (at least in pretence) dictate that which is quite contrary to the dictates of another mans Conscience; and therefore one of them must needs be supposed to be in a *mistake*, and consequently not infallible. 2. It will also follow, that a man would alwaies do *right*, when he acts according to the *dictates* of Conscience. But, that this is not true, is sufficiently evident by the example of St. Paul here before us, who before his Conversion did verily think himself bound in Conscience to do what he did against *Jesus Christ*; but this did not bear him out in it, as you will see more fully anon.

You see then the *Nature* and *Office* of Conscience, which will open our way for setting before you the dangerous *mistakes* of Conscience. The office of Conscience, you have heard, is, to take *cognizance* of, and pass a *judgement* upon our actions, according to the *Rule* of Gods Law, so as to encourage or discourage us before we enter upon them,

them ; and to accuse or excuse us, after we have done them. And herein chiefly lies the *mischievous* mistake of Conscience, that either it self doth erre by *mistaking* its Rule, and thereby comes to pass a wrong judgement upon our actions : or else (which may as probably be imagined) something else *intrudes* into the Office of Conscience on purpose to deceive us, by encouraging us to that which is evil, and dissuading us from that which is good ; accusing us when we have done that which is good and commendable, and excusing us when we have done that which is evil and unwarrantable. And by this means men are not onely drawn to evil courses, but encouraged and hardened in them, whilst they conceit themselves to follow the motions of Conscience, though all the while they are doing that which is quite contrary to a good Conscience.

Now there are especially *three things* that are ready to step into the seat of Conscience, and to delude us into a belief that we are led by Conscience, when we are stirred up by a worse principle, and do those things which are contrary to the right dictates of Conscience.

1. Sometimes the strength of *Fancy* or *Imagination* usurps the office of Conscience, and makes men believe they are prompted by Conscience to do such and such things, when it is nothing but *Fancy* that hurries them

them forward. It is strange to observe how powerful Imagination is, not onely to carry men violently forward in their motions ; but also to *disguise* it self so subtilly, that men will strongly *conceit* themselves not to be *conceited* in what they do. If we look to the *Sanguin-Fancies* that proceed from such a Constitution of the Body, how many remarkable stories have we both of the *Anabaptists* in *Germany*, and of many *Ranters* and *Libertines* in *England*, who under the lowd cry of Conscience, and Liberty of Conscience, have onely hunted for game to satisfie the foul lust of Uncleanness? Yea, and made the silly people of the world (if not themselves among the rest) to believe that even uncleanness it self should not be *filthy*, nor unlawful, while it did gratifie persons so highly in the favour of God, as they were confident to pronounce themselves to be. It is not indeed so strange, as it is sad, that such persons have prevailed so far, as to impose upon many of the injudicious Vulgar with these pretences : but that they could so far delude themselves as to conceit that they were acted by Conscience and by the Spirit of God, in these courses, seems a very great Wonder. The chiefest Reason I can give of the prevalency of this delusion, is, that these Fancies move them with so much violence and impetuosity, being helped forward by *Satan* who watcheth all opportunities to ensnare the soul; that the poor de-

deluded soul is ready to conceit it self to be moved by some extraordinary impulse of the Spirit of God, and so gives it self up confidently to the lustful embracing of a Cloud, in the shape of Juno.

And for that other humour of Melancholy, 'tis strange to observe the effects of it upon the Fancy ; this useth to beget *sowre* and *sad* fancies. And the stories which Physicians and Historians relate concerning the effects hereof, are so strange, that they would seem incredible to vulgar ears. And doubtless in many 'tis a *sowre* and *melancholick* temper of body (and *pride* together) that is the cause of their *severe* inclination, to dislike and find fault with whatsoever is practised by others ; and to effect a strange and *uncouth* way of living, under the notion of *Mortification*, and *Denying* of themselves. And in good people also, the prevalency of this Temper, is many times conspicuous : To this, many of their groundless *Doubts* and fears, as to their spiritual Estate, do owe their beginning : which though they represent themselves as the fruits of *tenderness* of Conscience, and are seldom or never to be found, but in persons of truly tender Consciences (as many bad weeds do not grow, but in the best soyl;) yet they are evil in themselves, as being a *false judgement* passed upon our selves, and a *denying* the great things which God hath done for our souls ; and as to their *tendency*, which

which is ordinarily the hindering of the soul from its *vigorous* actings in good duties, and from taking due *comfort* in the performances which Gods Spirit hath carried it through: These I say, are to be imputed to the constitution of the body, helped on by Satans Temptations.

If any enquire, upon hearing this, How we may *distinguish* these workings of *Fancy* from the true and genuin Motions of *Conscience*? and truly know what *impulses* we are to follow, and what to reject? I answer,

1. Look to the *Constitution* of thy Body; or if thou hast not much skill in such matters, be content to receive the *advice* of those that are able and competent Judges of it. Art thou of a *sanguin* Constitution, and findest the motions that solicite thee to a prosecution of them, to be of that nature? Or art thou naturally inclined to *Melancholy*, and findest such motions in thee as are suitable to that humour? It will be a great right done to Conscience, to forbear to impute those motions to it, which our own Reason may shew us to come from another cause.

2. Observe when the temper of thy Body doth *alter*, and see whether these motions and inclinations do alter with it. It is sufficiently evident, that the temper of mens bodies doth admit of alteration. The *Sanguin* temper will alter by *age* or *sickness*.

ness, or worldly cares : The Melancholick will vary by change of Air, or Dyt, or by the use of Physick, beside those lucid intervals wherein most Melancholick persons do meet with an abatement of that humour. Now ask thy own experience, whether these motions do not ebb and flow, according to the abating and encreasing of these Distempers in thy body ? If so, there is great reason to impute these motions and inclinations, not to Conscience, but to the temper of thy body ; and it would be a great wrong to the sacred name of Conscience, to father them upon it.

Secondly, Even the motions of Lust will sometimes deceive us, under the pretence of being the dictates of Conscience. This may seem very strange to them that have never been willing to put themselves to the trouble of examining the motions, which they have followed, whence they have come : But it is very palpable to every man, that with a discerning eye, and unbyassed mind, looks upon them. Sometimes the lust of the Eye, Covetousness, and Ambition, lapps it self in the Mantle of Conscience. *Come see my zeal, for the Lord of 2 King: Hosts, saith Jehu;* when every man knows 10.16. that it was somewhat else, and not true zeal, that made him drive so furiously. Yea, some may go so far as not only to deceive others, but themselves also, in this point ; as, in their denying Tythes, and other Payments,

'tis too too palpable, that Covetousness hath taken the place and office of Conscience; and yet sets so bold a face upon it, as if it were pure Conscience that guided these men to such practises. Sometimes that lust of *malice* and *revenge*, may put us forward to serve it under the notion of Conscience: So the Scribes and Pharisees persecuted Christ out of malice, and yet with a great shew of Zeal and Conscience: And those others, of whom our Saviour fore-tels, that they would persecute his Apostles, and *verily think they did God good service*, in doing it. Now if any enquire of the manner how these lusts come to prevail so far as to deceive us under the name of Conscience, I need say no more then I did upon the former Head, viz That the *Impetuosity* of these motions in the mind, may be apt to make us mistake them for some extraordinary *Inspirations*, which we ought not to resist. But to undeceive us in this point, it may be very useful to consider,

1. That what motions soever do encline us to any thing that is *forbidden* by the Law of God, are evil and to be *rejected*: Now the motions of lust, do alwayes stir us up to do that which is contrary to Gods Law, and therefore are to be *opposed*, though never so suitable and grateful to our sensitive appetite. *To the Law and to the Testimony we ought to look, and whatsoever persons or*

motions are contrary to that, this very thing is sufficient to convince us, that they are not of God.

2. If we find our selves to be zealously carried forward, onely in *some things* that tend to our own profit, or pleasure, and careless and remiss in *other things*, we have great reason to conclude these zealous motions, not to proceed from Conscience, but a worse Principle. *Jehu destroyed Baal* out ^{2 Kings} _{10.28,} ^{29.} *of Israel*, and was very zealous in it, as that which was a fair pretence for cutting off the house of *Ahab*, that none might be left to lay claim to the Crown; and also to dazzle the eyes of the people, that they might not rise up in opposition to him, who shewed himself so zealous in executing the Lords pleasure: *But from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat*, the serving of the golden Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, from these he departed not, because he thought the continuance of this, to be a good piece of policy, to keep the people from returning to *Jerusalem* to worship, lest they should also carry back the Kingdom to the House of *David*. Hereby *Jehu* did discover, that it was not zeal for God, but Covetousness and Ambition, that made him so strict in obeying Gods commands in other respects: And if any man find the same temper and tendency in his zeal, he will have just reason to suspect the same things concerning it.

3. Satans temptations and suggestions may sometimes impose upon men, under the notion of Conscience, and inspirations from the Spirit of God. The Apostle tells us, that Satan hath an art to transform himself into an Angel of light ; to represent his temptations, as the advice of some good Angel, or as the motions of the holy Spirit of God. He had the impudence to cite the **Cor.11.14.** Scripture in his tempting of our Saviour ; and therefore it is no marvel, if he seduce so many ignorant people to pervert the Scriptures, for the encouraging of themselves to do that which is quite contrary to the meaning of the Scriptures. Yea, we have very strong reasons to persuade us, that those raptures and Enthusiasms, which have possessed some of them, have been nothing else, but an higher degree of the working of Satan in them. And that they may not think we use them hardly in spending such a censure upon them, let them but consider how many of them, under the pretence of these *Institutes*, have encouraged themselves in Murthers, Adulteries, and other the greatest sorts of Impieties, which are no way imputable to the motions of the Holy Ghost, who as he is a most pure and holy Spirit, so is he far from inclining any man to that which is impure or unjust, but doth abhor such practises himself, and stirs up all those that are actuated by him, to the utmost loathing and abhorring of them.

Now

Now for distinguishing the temptations of the evil spirit from those motions that come from the good Spirit of God, I shall, to what was spoken upon the former head, add onely one Rule, *viz.* That it will greatly concern us to observe the tendency of these Motions: The Spirit of God, as it doth not move us to any thing that is evil in it self, so neither to any thing that tends directly to the producing of evil. And therefore, If any motions that seem never so specious, that look like Angels of Light at their first appearance, do yet tend to draw us to evil in the issue; if they tend either to draw us to any gross *impiety* or *dishonesty*, if they designe to draw us to the venting and maintaining any dangerous or *strange Doctrine*, or to the making of *rents* and *divisions* in the Church; we have reason to reject these, as *suggestions* of Satan, however they may make a shew of advancing us to higher attainments then ordinary. And thus we have seen, how the Conscience may be imposed upon so far, that men may think verily, that they ought, or are bound in Duty and Conscience, to do that which is really amiss.

I proceed to the other Position, *That 2 Position*,
this mistake or misguiding of Conscience, doth not excuse or warrant those irregularities, which men erroneously run into. It is not sufficient for men to plead Conscience for what they do, that their Conscience binds them to do this, and to abhor the other;

except they can shew sufficient grounds for these motions and inclinations that are imputed to Conscience, this will not warrant them in what they do. This, I think, is so clear, that it cannot but be received by every serious and sober person, so that I shall not need to spend many words for the confirmation of it: onely let me entreat you to consider,

1. What the Apostle *Paul* speaks of himself, who is a notable instance to this purpose. While a person is distempered in minde, he is not capable of judging how sad a condition he is in; but when he is recovered out of it, then is he very sensible of the sad condition he was formerly in, and of the great cure that hath been wrought in his recovery. So men that are under these delusions of Conscience, are not competent judges of their own actions; but St. *Paul* who recovered out of this condition, may more properly be heard to speak in this case. He tells us in the Text, that he did not persecute Christ out of malice towards his person; but because, through the misguiding of his Conscience, he did not believe him to be the true *Messiah*: But doth he think this sufficient to warrant, or yet excuse his persecution? No, for notwithstanding this, he calls his sins by their proper names, and acknowledgeth himself

^{1 Tim. 1.} to have been a *blasphemer, and a persecutor, 13, 15, 16 and injurious; yea, the chief of sinners, and such*

such an one that it was a great wonder that ever the Lord had shewed him mercy. He tells us that he had persecuted the Church with Zeal as hot as fire. But doth he think that the heat of his Zeal would warrant the irregularity of his actions? No, but tells us that he was the least of the Apostles, and not worthy the name of an Apostle, because he had persecuted the Church of God. And what we have said of the Apostle Paul, in his unregenerate estate, we may say of the generality of the Jews of that age, that they had a Zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. And what they did unto our Saviour (the common people denied the Holy One and the Just, and their Rulers killed the Prince of Life) St. Peter bears them witness that they did it through ignorance, both the People and Rulers. But shall we think that this did excuse so horrid a fault? No, the Apostle tells them that for that very sin, The wrath of God was come upon them to the utmost, and so hath continued for so many hundreds of years. Yea, the Turks and all other Heathens and Idolaters, are doubtless given up to such blindness of minde, that they verily conceit themselves to do well in worshipping their false gods, and defying the onely true God, and his Son Jesus Christ; but I hope, no man is so senseless as to think that these mistakes of their Consciences do excuse, much less warrant, these practices.

2. Reason bears witness to this Truth; for we have shewed before that the proper Office of Conscience, is to judge according to the Law of God. And, as the opinion of a Judge, who is bound to adhere to the Laws of the Land, doth not make that to be Law which is contrary to the written Laws; it being very unreasonable to think that his transgressing the bounds of his Office, should excuse another, that adventures to do that which is forbidden : So Conscience, which is bound to proceed in judging according to the Law of God, if it negle& this Rule, cannot warrant a man in doing that which is contrary to this Rule. And it would be very unreasonable for any man to imagine that these mistaken dictates of Conscience should excuse him that follows them, except Conscience were the *Supream Law*; the contrary whereof I have shewed before.

I have done with the opening of the Positions, and shall next proceed to the improving of them, by drawing several practical Inferences from what hath been spoken.

i. Infere-
nce.

1. This may shew us what great need we have to be very circumspect and cautious in trying those motions that present themselves under the Notion of Impulses of Conscience. It will concern us, not rashly to believe or obey those motions in our selves, that pretend to come from Conscience, till

we have first tryed them, whether they be not the *Impulses* of our *Imaginations*, or the *clamours* of our *lusts*, or the *voice* of Satans *snggestions*. Nor yet too credulously to believe all the pretences that other men make to Conscience. And there be several dangerous *Symptoms*, whereby it will appear very evidently, that men are either not at all acted by Conscience, in what they do, or (at least) by a mistaken and deluded Conscience.

First, When men are very strict and scrupulous in some things, and very careless in others. *Then shall I not be ashamed* (saith Da-
vid) *when I have respect to all thy Commandments*. This is a good sign of a truely conscientious person, when he hath an even and equal respect to every part of Gods Law: *So to do one as not to leave another undone*. But, on the contrary, as in the Body, we reckon it a sign of a *dijtempered* stomach, when the appetite is carried out to an inordinate longing after some sortis of food, which is attended with a fastidious nauseating of others: so in the soul 'tis a sign of a Conscience that is out of order, when men are more then necessarily strict and scrupulous in some matters, and careless of keeping other commands: when men are not careful both to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

2. Especially, if men spend a great deal
of

of Zeal, and make a great stir in the World, about smaller and less considerable matters, and in the mean time are cool and remiss in matters of greater moment. Indeed, all Gods Commands are great, and the least of them is not to be slighted : but, as our Saviour speaks of *a first and great Commandment*, and elsewhere of *one of the least of his commandments*: So he makes it a sign of an hypocritical Conscience, when men strain at a gnat and swallow a camel ; when they took special care to tythe mint, and annis, and cummin, but neglected the weightier matters of the Law, Justice, and Mercy, and the Love of God : So if we see men that had rather kill a good Minister, than hear a good Sermon ; rather pull down the houses of God, than come to worship God in them ; rather starve their Pastour, than pay him their Tythes ; rather cut off a mans head, than move their own hat ; we may very reasonably doubt that 'tis no well-informed Conscience, that puts them upon spending so much zeal and industry about such trifles and niceties.

3. If men do what they do, rather to gratifie their own humours, than to please God and benefit his Church. Those are truely good works, and acceptable to God, as proceeding from a right Christian spirit, which are the Fruits of pure obedience to Gods Law, and done with a true design to please God, and to further the good of his Church.

Church. And therefore if men embrace *opinions* and *crochets* in Religion, or Heterodox *singularities* in their practices, not so much because they believe them to be *acceptable* to God, but because they suit with their own *humours*: If men are so in love with what they have conceited to be *convenient*, that (though themselves cannot but believe and confess it to be an indifferent thing) yet they will not *depart* an hairs breadth from their own *humours*; though their *complyance* in such things, would tend never so much to the *peace* of the Church, and the good of the *Community*; if there be not *humour* and *pride* at the bottom of this, yet certainly there is but little shew of a *well-informed* Conscience.

4. If men are stiff and zealous in their courses, for this end, that they may *advance* their *fortunes* in the world thereby. He that is truely conscientious, doth not onely talk much of the *glory* of God, but doth indeed and truth make it his utmost end. And therefore if we see men fickle for novel *opinions* and *conceits* in Religion, and betake themselves to *parties* and *separations*, and embrace odd kinde of *singularities* in their lives, onely that they may be taken notice of beyond other people by being of another *Colour*: If men plead hard for such things, in the advancing of which, and opposing the contrary, they have greatly *promoted* their worldly *estates*; though these later

later may seem to shew somewhat of a grateful spirit towards those things that have been good benefactors to them, yet neither
 Act. 19. sort shew any better Zeal than Demetrius
 25. and his crafts-men did in crying out against St. Paul and his Doctrine, not that they cared so much for the honour of Diana, but because by that craft they had their wealth.

5. If men spend much Zeal in finding faults with others, but little or none in reforming what is amiss in themselves. Tiberius in Tacitus observed it to be the temper [Tacitus] of men of mutinous spirits, *Accusare tantum
Annal. I. 3. vitia, & deinde cum gloriari ejus rei adepti
sint, similitates facere*: They sought for applause, and the Title of pious men, onely by loud exclamations against the faults of other men; and when they had raised their credits amongst the vulgar by these arts, then upon this stock they set up a Trade of *Faction* and *Sedition*. And when we see men spend all their time and zeal in *censuring*, and *reviling*, and *scorning* at the practices of others, while in the mean time they are careless of themselves, and neglect to reform what is amiss in their own *lives*, we may conclude that, if there be not *Sedition*, to be sure there is little of *Conscience* at the bottom: for the office of Conscience (as you have heard) is, to judge, not other mens persons or actions, but chiefly, and in the first place, *our own*.

6. When

6. When men avoid and *despise* the means of Conviction, it is a signe that their Consciences are not in right order. Every truly conscientious person makes it his earnest desire, in the first place, not to do amiss; and, next to this, that he may be made sensible of his errors, and brought back into the right way when he hath wandered from it. And those therefore that make it the first principle, which they teach their Disciples, to *forsake* and *despise* the publick Ordinances, for fear lest they should be convinced of the errors which they are running into, do make such a Covenant with them, as *Nahash* desired to do with the Children of *Israel*, *To thrust out their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon Israel*: And they shew that they have rather taken a strong fancy to their own Conceits, then that they have a well-informed Conscience, and a sincere desire to do as they ought.

^{1 Sam.}
^{11.2.}

By these and such like *Rules*, we may both try those motions that we find in our own minds, whether they proceed from a well-informed Conscience or no: And also may give a gheſſ at those who are about us, whether they be in good earnest, and well-advised in their large talking of Conscience in their proceedings. And that I may prevail with you to lay these things to heart, let me add, that 'Tis a business of great importance, to have our judgments well informed

formed in this point: and that I shall briefly demonstrate, by shewing in two words, the great hazard that men run in entertaining their own fancies, or the motions of lust, or the suggestions of Satan, for motions of Conscience.

First, While men embrace these delusions, they sin at a more dangerous rate than other men; in that they go on the more earnestly and confidently in evil, while they think they do God good service in doing it: And further, they are harder to be reclaimed than a profane person, *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool, than of him.* Besides that they aggravate their sins, by taking the sacred name of Conscience in vain, while they pretend it to patronize them in that which is evil.

Secondly, When such men come in cool blood to consider what they have done, and to find out the mistakes they have committed under the thoughts of being acted by Conscience, it may be in danger to make them cast off all Conscience, and turn *Seekers* in matters of Religion, which are next door to *Atheists*. Add to this, that the exorbitant courses which many have taken under pretence of being led by their Conscience, hath sadly opened the mouths of profane persons, to scorn at Conscience it self, and take no care to keep a good Conscience, or to do that which is agreeable to it.

2 It

Prov. 26.
12.

2. It may be very wholesome and seasonable Advice, to endeavour rightly to inform our selves in the nature of the true Christian Liberty : which will be one special help to the due information of our Consciences, in many controverted points. It is most certain, that, beside the Liberty which Christ hath purchased for us from his Fathers wrath, and from the thralldome, and slavery of sin and Satan ; there is likewise this further Liberty which every Christian may comfortably expect under this New Covenant, that was not to be enjoyed under the old, viz. That if the sincere purpose and desire of our soul be to please God, and this desire do shew it self to be real, by a constant and diligent endeavouring to walk in those wayes which are acceptable to God ; our gracious and merciful Father will not be extream to mark those defects that proceed from the infirmity of our Nature, but will cover our imperfections, and accept of our Obedience, through the perfection of Christs obedience. And further, that in things, which in their own Nature are truly indifferent, there is much Liberty allowed us by God, provided still that our desires be towards his Glory in what we do.

Now as the due apprehension of this would be of great advantage to us, to make us go on the more cheerfully and comfortably in his service ; so for want of being duly informed about it, the soul doth sustain much

much prejudice. Some, by overstretching the Nature of Christian Liberty, have proceeded to turn the Grace of God into wantonness; and others, by not understanding how far this Liberty doth extend, have incurred great prejudice. For,

1. Hence have proceeded *endless and unprofitable scruples* in the Conscience. The word *scruple* (as some say) comes from that *dust or gravel in our shooes*, which, though small in it self, yet gives us great trouble being in such a place. And so, Scruples in the Conscience, though small and inconsiderable in themselves, yet do greatly disturb the mind. Indeed, when men pretend to scruples in small and indifferent matters, while they can take too much Liberty in matters that go nearer to the life of Religion; 'tis a signe that their Consciences are sick of a *Pharisaical disease*. But yet 'tis sufficiently evident, that the *sobrest and truly conscientious* people are much disturbed in their minds with such scruples, as even themselves are sensible that there is little weight in them. And though this trouble doth argue a sincere desire in the soul to please God, yet 'tis of bad consequence, as tending to distract and distract the soul in good duties, and to take off that *cheerfulness* which ought to be in us, in serving so good a Master.

2. Hence a man may come to a *doubting Conscience*. Divines distinguish thus between a *scrupulous*, and a *doubting Conscience*.

Conscience. A *scrupulous Conscience*, is, when a man is satisfied in the main, of the lawfulness of an action, but yet there are some odde inconsiderable thoughts in his mind which trouble it: A *doubting Conscience*, is, when a man doubts in the main of the lawfulness of the action. And accordingly they resolve that against a scrupulous Conscience a man *may*, yea sometimes *must* of necessity proceed, but not against a doubting Conscience: Now through ignorance of the due extent of this Christian Liberty, a man may come to these doubtings of Conscience, which will quite put him to a stand in many things.

3. From this a man may come to that which Divines call, *a perplexed Conscience*, which involves a man in a kind of necessity of finning. That there is such a perplexed estate of Conscience, may be evident by such an Instance as this. Put the case that a lawful Authority enjoyns us something about a matter which in its self is *truly indifferent*: If a man doth not yield obedience to it, he sins against the *fifth Commandment*, and if he doth yield obedience, and yet doubts that the thing he doth is unlawful, though he doth not *formally* break any of Gods Commandments, yet *virtually* he doth, in yielding to that which he *believes* to be *sinful*, and so falls under that censure of the Apostle, Rom. 14. 23. It is indeed a sad case when the soul is involved in such a perplexity

plexity. But God is not the Author of this occasion of sin, for he made the Conscience *upright*, and 'tis the fall of man that hath brought upon it this and all other disorders. And forasmuch as you have heard that the mistake of Conscience, doth not excuse the irregularity of an action, it will therefore concern us the more diligently to study the true Christian Liberty, that we may not at any time come to this pass.

*3 Infer-
ence.*

3. Let me add a word of *Caution*. Let no man from what hath been spoken, take occasion to *make light* of Conscience. Because you have heard that Conscience may be, and is many times *deceived*, let no man hence conclude that all pretences to Conscience, are either *counterfeit* or *erroneous*: That all men who pretend to Conscience, are either *Deceivers*, or *deceived*.

Conscience is a *Sacred* thing, and of *Sovereign authority* with all good men. And those wicked men that will not hearken to the *voice* of Conscience in this world, but cast away its cords from them, shall in the world to come, find it turned to a *Worm* that shall gnaw, and torment their souls to all eternity.

*4 Infer-
ence.*

Lastly, To you *Fathers and Brethren of the Clergy*, my speech directs it self. Forasmuch as it is evident, that the misguiding of mens Consciences is so common and dangerous a disease, and there are so many *Seducers* abroad, that lie in wait to deceive them

them into this inconvenience: Let me therefore take the liberty to put you in mind, whose Office obligeth you to be *Guides to mens Lives and Consciences*; that you use all possible diligence in the *rectifying* those mistakes which impose upon mens Consciences; and *cut off* all just occasion from them that are ready to seek occasion for delivering up their minds to be seduced to an embracing of that which is evil. Let us put no advantage into the hands of false Teachers, that make it their busines to deceive ignorant and well-meaning people: Nor let us justly provoke such people to deliver up themselves as a prey to those Foxes and Wolves. And to this end, give me leave to commend to you this two-fold word of *Exhortation*.

1. To be *diligent* and *constant* in *preaching* such sound *Doctrine* as may both *exhort* the people to that which is good, and also *convince* Gain-sayers. Let not the people have any just occasion given them to follow these grievous Wolves, because those that should teach them, are *dumb Dogs*, that either can- ^{Isa. 56} not, or will not bark, and look after nothing, ^{11.} but every man his gain from his quarter. Let them find that the *Priests lips do preserve Knowledge*, and that it is the best course for the people to seek the *Law at their mouths*, who ^{Mal. 2.7.} by their Office, are the *Messengers of the Lord of Hosts*. Let's take the Apostles Exhortation: *Preach the Word, be instant in season,* ^{2 Tim. 4.2.}

and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with

*2 Tim. 2. all Long-suffering and Doctrine. Let us shew
15. our selves Workmen that need not be ashamed*

*of our work, and such as are not a shame to
our Work and Profession; but rightly divid-
ing the word of Truth, so as to carve to eve-*

*Tit. 1.11. ry man his portion. And withal, There
are some whose mouths must be stopped, who*

*2 Tim. 3. creep into Houses, and lead captive silly people.
6.*

*And these we must confute (if they will not
be convinced) with sound Doctrine, that
the people may see the reasonableness of the
truths which we preach, & the unreasona-
bility of the errors that are taught in corners.
And for those that are impetuously obstinate
in their errors, I doubt not but our Church,
which hath waited for their return with*

*2 Cor. 10. much long-suffering, will seasonably exer-
8. cise towards them, that power which God*

*bath given, for their edification, and not for
Acts 20. their destruction.
28.*

*2. We must also take heed to our selves as
well as to our Doctrine, that we give no ad-
vantage to false Teachers, to insinuate into
men of good Affections, a fancy to leave
the Church, because of the scandalous lives*

*1 Tim. 4. of them that are publick Preachers. Let us
12. be to the Believers a pattern, not onely in word,*

but also in Conversation, in Charity, in Spi-

*1 Sam. 3. rit, in Faith, in Purity. Remember how
13. God did punish Eli's house, when his sons,*

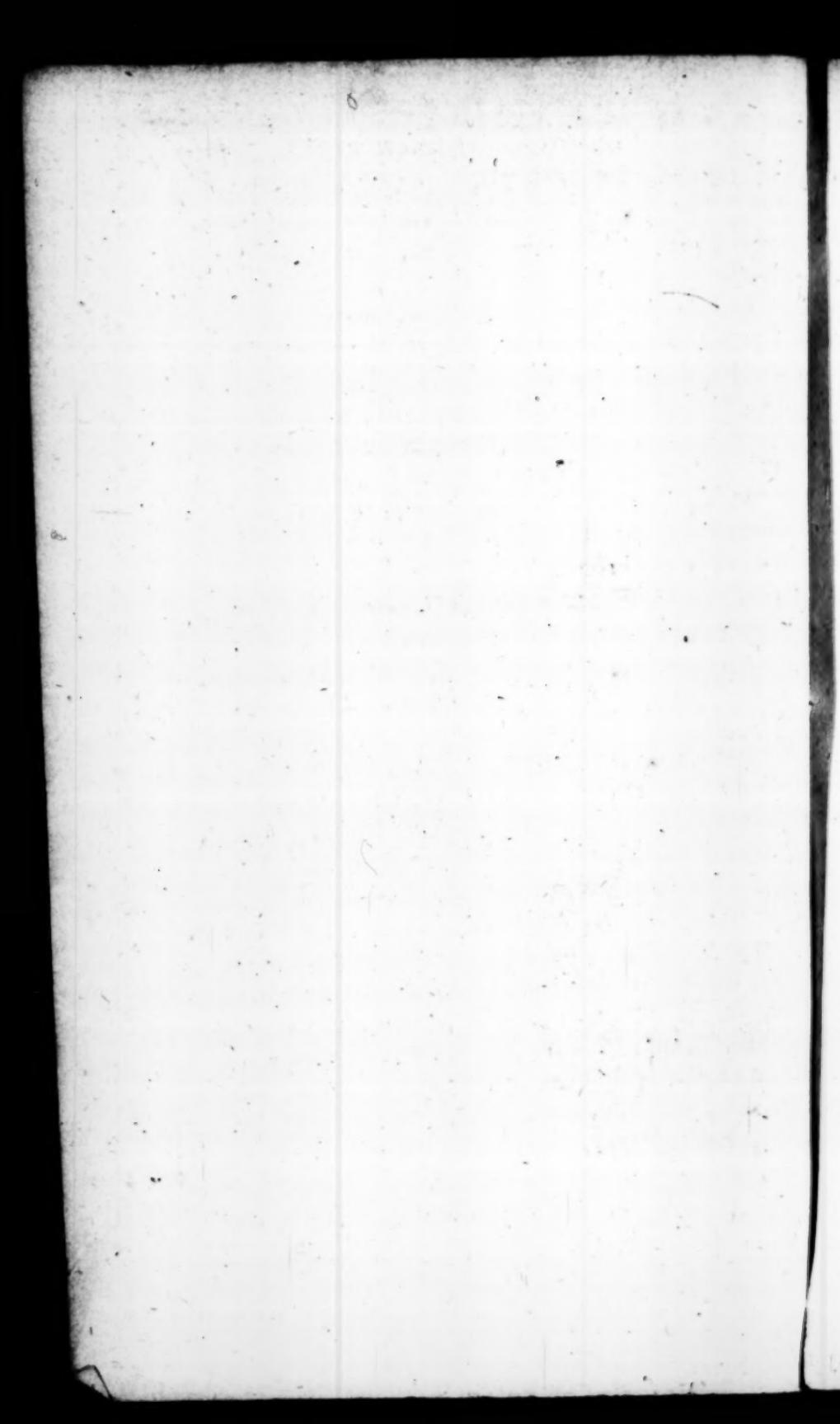
*by their wicked lives, made men to abhor
the offerings of the Lord. Remember what*

God

God threatens to the Priests, *Mal. 2. 2,3.*
and 8,9. Remember also our Saviours words, *Mar. 5.*
Ye are the salt of the Earth ; if the salt have ^{17.} *lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned ?*
It is thenceforth meet for nothing, but to be ^{1 Tim. 4}
troden under feet of men. Let us therefore ¹ *take heed to our Selves, and to our Doctrine,* ^{16.}
and then we may hope that we shall be In-
struments to promote the salvation of our
selves, and of those that hear us. However,
Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall we be ^{Isa. 49.4.}
glorious in the eyes of the Lord : And our judg- ^{5.}
ment shall be with the Lord, and our work with
our God : Though evil men and seducers shall ^{2 Tim. 3.}
wax worse and worse, deceiving and being de- ^{13.}
ceived, yet we having discharged the parts ^{Ezek. 3.}
of faithful watchmen, shall have delivered ^{19.}
our own souls.

Now the Lord of his mercy, inform the
Consciences of those that are erroneous, and
soften the Consciences of prophanie sinners, ^{Acts 24.}
and give us all gracie to keep *Consciences void* ^{16.}
of offence, toward God and man, in this world;
that so when we have fought our good fight, ^{2 Tim. 4.}
finished our course, and kept the Faith unto ^{7,8.}
death, we may at death receive the Crown of
Righteousness, through the alsufficient merits
of Jesus Christ: To whom, with the Fa-
ther, and the Holy Ghost, let us give, as is
most due, all Honour and Glory, world
without end, Amen.

F I N I S.





THE
Subtile and Pestilent Nature
O F
SEDUCERS.

Ephes. 4. 14.

That we henceforth be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lye in wait to deceive.



THE Gospel written by St. Mark (whose memory we celebrate this day) hath in all Ages been received as Canonical Scripture. But there hath been some difference amongst the Learned concerning the Person that wrote it; some

some affirming it to be written by that *Mark* whom St. *Peter* calls his Son, *1 Pet. 5. 13.* Others supposing the Author of it to be that *Mark* who was also called *John*, the Son of *Mary*, of whom we read, *Acts 12. 12.*

That he whom St. *Peter* calls his Son, was the Evangelist, I suppose to be beyond controversie: the onely doubt that remains, is whether he was the same with *John-Mark*, the Son of *Mary*; or another person of the same name. This I cannot finde absolutely determined by the Learned and Judicious: and therefore shall leave it in the middle.

It is agreed that this St. *Mark the Evangelist* was the first Bishop of *Alexandria*, as *Dorotheus* tells us: and that he preached the Gospel to all those parts, from *Egypt* even to *Pentropolis*.

The time of whose Preaching the Gospel in *Egypt*, *Bucholizer* determines to be about the 44th. year of Christ. Concerning the time when he wrote this Gospel, no certainty can be gathered out of Historians, saith *Bullinger*. But *Eusebius* reports it to be presently after the confusion of *Sixtus Magnus*, which was in the Reign of *Nero*, and about the 68th. year of Christ. And yet *Bucholizer* in his Chronology reports from *Eusebius* (I suppose his Chronicle) that St. *Mark* did suffer death four or five years before this time. So that the most Learned and diligent searchers of Antiquity,

*Buchol.
Chronol.*

*Euseb.
Eccl.
Hist. l. 2.
c. 15.*

are not free from over-sights especially in Chronology. But this by the way.

For the occasion of the writing of this Eccl. Gospel, Eusebius relates it thus, out of Cle. Hist. l. 2. mens Alexandrinus. That, after that wonderful confusion of Simon Magus, the Christian Religion began so much to flourish and encrease amongst them that had heard St. Peter preach, that they were not content to hear these things once, nor to receive them by unwritten Tradition; but earnestly desired St. Mark, that he would write down for them the substance of that History of Christ, which they had received by word of Mouth. And ceased not, till they had prevailed with him. And thereby they gave occasion to the writing of that Holy Gospel, which we to this day enjoy the benefit of, and which bears the name of him that wrote it.

And again Eusebius writes further out of Hist.: Papias, that St. Mark being St. Peters at- Eccl. l. 3. tendant and Interpreter, did accurately c. ult. write down what he had heard from St. Peter: not indeed in the same order, as they were spoken or done by our Saviour, for he was not one of them that heard and followed Christ, but onely heard St. Peter, and wrote what he retained in his memory from his preaching. And therefore he is not to be condemned, for that he doth not follow the Method of the other Evangelists, seeing he did not design a full Commentary of all things

things that Christ had done and spoken, but onely to relate with 'faithfulness, what he did retain in his memory.)

Eust. And further, the said *Eusebius*, relating a Catalogue of the Books of Canonical Scripture, out of *Origen*, he speaks of this Gospel written by St. *Mark*, that he wrote it according to the direction of St. *Peter*, who in his aforementioned Epistle calls him his Son.

c. 24. **Pet. 5.** **13.** The death of this Holy Evangelist is referred to the Reign of *Nero*, and the 63d. year of Christ, by *Bucholtzer*, in his Chronology. But *Dorotheus* refers it to the Reign of *Trajan*, and describes the manner of it, thus: That at *Alexandria*, in the place called *Bucolus*, he had a Cable-rope put about his neck, and therewith drawn from *Bucolus*, to a place called the Place of the Angels, and there by the Idolaters burnt to death in the Month of *April*, and his bones buried in the *Bucolus*. This account I thought meet to trouble you with, concerning this Holy Evangelist St. *Mark*.

v. 10, 11. The Text you know, is part of that portion of Scripture appointed by our Church to be read as the Epistle for this day. In the beginning of which Portion, the Apostle sheweth us that the variety of those gifts which God hath bestowed upon divers members of his Church, are the fruits and benefits of *Christ's Ascension*: And that the end

end of all the Officers, both extraordinary and ordinary, which he hath appointed in the Church, is for the benefit of the whole, πρὸς τὸν καταπτίσμον, for the perfecting or knitting together of the Saints: And for the work of the Ministry, to fit men to serve him in the daily administration in the Church: and for the edifying of the Body of Christ, for the building up of the Church, and further instructing of those that are come into it. *Till we all come in the unity of the* Vers. 12.
Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, till Jews and Gentiles come to be one sheepfold under one Shepherd, and till we be grown up to that perfection of Knowledge, as will speak us to be men of Scripture. And then he proceeds, in my Text, to shew one of the great Benefits which we hope to reap from those Officers whom Christ hath appointed in his Church, and from our being built up in Knowledge and Holiness, by their Ministry, that we shall be settled in the unity of the Orthodox Faith, against all the assaults of those that are enemies to the Truth. *That we henceforth be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried away with every wind of Doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

In which words, we may observe six parts

1. The causal particle of conjunction, οὐα, οὐατ.
2. The

2. The subjects spoken of, included in the verb (*σύν*) we be.

3. The condition they had formerly been in, which had disposed them to receive prejudice; and that is expressed in the word, *νήπιοι*, Children.

4. The prejudice, which they had been apt to receive in that condition, which is set forth in two very Emphatical words, *κλυδωνιζόμενοι*, and *περιφερόμενοι*, tossed to and fro, and carried about.

5. The instruments of doing them this mischief, set forth in those words, *παντὶ ἀνέμῳ τῆς θεοσκηλίας*, the winds of strange Doctrine.

6. The Authors and Promoters of this mischief, which are set forth in those words, *ἐν τῇ κοινείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*, by πανεγγία πρὸς τὴν μεδοδίαιαν τῆς πλάνης. By the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

While I go over the illustration of each of these parts, and improve them to our instruction and Edification, I shall be bold to beg your serious and candid attention.

Part. I begin with the leading part of the Text, the Conjunction which connects these words with what went before. *Pulchre in Metaphorā a viro perfectō sumptā perseverat*, &c. saith Mesander upon this Text. The Apostle had been mentioning it but now, as one of the special benefits which we receive

ceive by those Officers which Christ hath appointed in his Church, that we might be built up from the condition of Children, to that of grown men, or men of stature in the Faith. And here he proceeds further in setting forth this benefit, that being come to the stature of men in the knowledge of Christ, we should now put away childish things; *wavering and irresolution of minde in matters of Faith*; and let our selves as men to stand fast in the Profession of that Faith, into which we have been Baptized. Our Learned Doctor Hammond doth express the sense of this illative particle to the life thus: *Which may secure us that we henceforth, &c.* So that this Conjunction doth readily offer us this Note. That the continuance of a powerful and painful Ministry in the Church, is one special expedient to establish people in the Faith, and to settle them against the seducements of false Teachers.

The truth of this is so evident to every mans Observation, that I shall need to say very little for the clearing of it. To the Office of a Minister it belongs, to shew the people the ways of Truth which they ought to follow, and by so doing, they must needs at once shew them the by-ways of errour which they ought to avoid. For, *Rectum est index sui & obliqui.* To the Office of a Minister it appertains to exhort and admonish the people that they be not drawn away by *the error of the wicked*, to depart from their own

own stedfastness, but rather to grow in Grace. Now the words of the wise, saith Solomon, are as nails to fatten men, and as goads to stir them forward in that which is good, when they are fainted by the wise Masters of Assemblies. And therefore the labours of such may probably be expected to be effectual, through Gods blessing, to establish, strengthen, and settle mens mindes against the tempestuous Winds of erronius Doctrines. From hence then,

1. We may see that it is no wonder, that they whose design it is to seduce the people to errours, do bear such a bitter and implacable hatred to the Ministry: that they have spent their mouths so liberally, in bestowing upon them and their Function, all the Calumnies and scurrilities, which the malice of Hell could invent: that the subtlest spirits amongst them by attempting to take away their ancient and settled maintenance, have designed to stop their mouths by starving them, except they would learn, *cum p̄sittaco suum χαιρε*. The Wolves in the Fable, when they had made War against the Sheep, would admit of no accommodation, except upon these terms, that they should deliver up the Dogs of the Flock; intending thereby, that the removal of these, should make way for their quiet and secure preying upon the Flock. Every man may easily see how *Mutato nomine, de his fabula narratur.* These grievous Wolves whose design is to prey

prey upon the Flock, knowing full well that the Ministry is the greatest defence of the Flock, and offence to them; cry out by all means to have these taken away that they might securely prey upon the Flock, when none was left to oppose them.

2. Hence we see likewise what reason we have to be very thankful to God, for appointing and continuing this Office in the Church, That our Lord Jesus Christ, *when he ascended up on high, gave gifts to men to fit them for this work*: that he hath held these Stars ^{Rev. 3. 1.} *in his own right hand*, mauger the Fanatick rage of erronious and illiterate miscreants. It is easie to imagine, what an Egyptian darkness would have over-spread the face of our Church, if these Stars had been removed. Let us therefore be thankful to him that hath upheld these, and that they still *shine amongst us*, both to shew us the right way to heaven, and to discover and shame the dark and absurd Doctrines of men of unsound and corrupt mindes.

3. We learn hence, whereunto we that are employed in this honourable and weighty Office of the Ministry, ought to apply our selves, even to be instant in season and out of season, both exhorting the people to the practising of good Duties, and also convincing gain-sayers with such speech as can not reasonably be gain-said, that so those that are &c 2. 8. ^{Tit. 1. 9}

contrarily minded may be ashamed, and those that are in the right may be encouraged to stand fast in the Faith. And though men of unsound heads may esteem this way of preaching to be galling and unpleasant, yet it being our duty, we must not neglect it: And we should the more be engaged to faithfulness, by considering those that are committed to our charge; which leads me to the

- 2 Pet. 2. 20.** II. Thing in the Text, the Subjects here spoken of, included in the Verb, $\alpha\mu\tau$, (*we be not*). You shall seldom see Hereticks to attempt the seducing of lewd and profane persons: for they know that such are a disgrace to any Profession or Cause, to which they adhere or wish well: But their great design is to pervert them that have in some measure escaped the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of Christ: because they are sensible that the fame of the innocence and strictness of the lives of those that are retainers to their ways, will make men of good affections and weak judgements, to have the greater kindness for, and inclinations towards their opinions. And indeed such is the subtlety of these false Prophets, that, as our Saviour saith, *They would deceive, if it were possible, the very Elect.* Now, these words of Christ, may give us a fit opportunity to enquire concerning these subjects (*we*) how far Gods Elect and Sanctified ones may
- Mat. 24. 34.**

may be led away with the error of the wicked, so as to depart from their own steadfastness? In answer whereunto, I say,

1. That it is certain that such shall never fall away to such errors as will be inconsistent with Christianity, and the holding of which would shew a man to have left that one Foundation, besides which no other can be laid. The Apostle speaks of some Heretics that should bring in damnable doctrines, even denying the Lord that bought them. Now we say, that none that ever had true Grace in his heart, shall be totally given over to such errors, so as to live and dye in them. Peter indeed denied his Master three times, but he was in a little while convinced of his sin, and went forth and wept bitterly. But to persist in errors of this Nature, is inconsistent with a state of Grace. Though there are diversities of Physiognomies amongst men, yet all have the faces of men: And though true Christians may have different thoughts about some points, yet they all hold fast the Foundation of Christianity. And this we may make use of

First, To comfort us as to any of our Friends or those whom we wish well unto, that are either ensnared, or in danger to be ensnared in errors. If they be such as truly fear God, we may comfortably conclude, that though they fall, yet they shall rise again, be-

Psal. 37. cause the Lord upholdeth them with his hand.
 24. And Christ hath prayed for them, as he did
 Luk. 21. for Peter, that their faith do not utterly fail.

31. 2. It may shew us how to judge of them
 that are quite departed from the foundation
 of that Faith into which they were baptiz-
 ed: even as the Apostle doth in the like
 1 Joh. 2. case. They went out from us, because they
 19. were not of us; for if they had been of us, they
 would have continued with us: but they went
 out from us, that it might be manifest that they
 were not of us.

Secondly, But yet we say that in matters
 further off from the Foundation, thôle that
 are of truly gracious and honest hearts, may
 erre and be deceived. Amongst the sons
 of men, there is such variety of Features
 in their faces, that no two are in all points
 alike; and yet are all concluded under the
 general name of men. And amongst the
 minds of men, there may be great variety
 in smaller matters, and yet while they hold
 fast the foundation, we are not to exclude
 them from our charity, as if they were no
 Christians. And this may serve

1 Cor. 4. 1. For caution; they that think they stand
 7. fast, have need to take heed lest they fall: And,
 Rom. 11. as the same Apostle elsewhere, Thou standest
 20. by Faith; be not high minded but fear. We
 have heard, that even truly good men may
 fall into some errors; and we see by daily
 experience, that men of very high Profes-
 sions

sions, and Attainments have fallen, and do daily fall. Now Pride and Carelessness, will put any of us into the way of falling, and therefore let us not be secure, nor *lean to our own understandings*, but trust to the strength of the Lord, who alone is able to hold us up. Prov. 3. 5.

2 This should teach us charity toward many seduced persons. There are *Seducers*, and *Seduced*, amongst tho Sectaries. The *Seducers* are abominable, and to be prayed against: The *Seduced* are to be pitied and prayed for. Our Church teacheth us very piouſly and charitably to pray, that God would please to bring into the way of Truth, all such as have erred and are deceived: And also, that he would strengthen such as do stand, and finally beat down Satan under our feet. And this is a prayer which we had need daily and devoutly to put up, seeing even those that are truly gracious, may fall into some Errors. And they are in this danger especially at some times, which leads me to the

III. Part of the Text, viz. The condition which these Christians had formerly been in, which had laid them open to the danger of being seduced, and that is set down in the word, *νήπιοι, children.* When I was a child, saith the Apostle, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: 1 Cor. 13. 10. But when I became a man, I put away childish things

things. *Pueri mobiles sunt, & sine judicio,*
 &c. saith *Mesander* in locum. Children
 are fickle, and without judgment, and
 therefore do easily assent to any Doctrine.
 And *Calvin*, *Pueri sunt, qui nondum gressum*
firmarunt in via Domini, &c. They are cal-
 led Children, who have not settled their
 feet in the way of the Lord: who are not
 fully resolved which way to take; but fluctu-
 ate, inclining now this way, now that way.
 But those that are settled in Christianity,
 though they be not arrived to full perfecti-
 on, yet they have so much constancy as to
 be settled in the Faith. A Child, you know,
 will easily be induced to believe any thing,
 upon slight grounds; will presently be en-
 flamed with an eager love to any novel vani-
 ty; will easily be persuaded to follow a
 stranger, or to part with any thing it hath,
 because it knows not the value of it. So
 those that are *inicii*, children in Christianity
 are easily induced to believe the fair and spe-
 cious pretences of seducing spirits; to de-
 light in novel Opinions, and modes in Re-
^{3 Pet. i. 1.}ligion; to follow false Teachers, and to de-
 part from that precious *Faith*, into which
 they were Baptized. And as there are three
 things in Children which makes them prone
 to mistakes, so also in them that are Chil-
 dren in knowledge.

1. Want of Consideration. They do not
 take the pains to weigh what they hear, but
 pre-

presently entertain and are fond of it; whereas Elder persons are more staid and deliberate, and have, through use, obtained a faculty to see further into a thing than those that are younger. And while men are Children in Christianity, they are apt rashly and *inconsiderately* to fall out with the Truth, and to embrace novelties; whereas due consideration would prevent this.

2. Want of Experience. Experience is the Mother of Prudence; for want of this, Children are so easily overseen. And those people that are not versed in the History of the Church, to observe the rising and falling of these Errors in former Ages, that have not experience of the subtlety and wickedness of seducing spirits, may easily be ensnared by their fair pretences.

3. Self-confidence. Young persons are prone to conceit themselves to know more than their Elders; and this confidence doth commonly overthrow them, while it withholdeth them from hearkning to the advice which elder years might administer. And the Apostle tells us, that Novices in the Faith, are very apt to be puffed up with pride, ^{I Tim. 3:6.} and thereby to fall into the snare of the Devil.

It will greatly concern us therefore, to take the Apostles Exhortation. *Brethren,* ^{1 Cor. 14:13.} *be not children in understanding: In malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men.* For to be children in Knowledge, will expose us

to that great mischief, which I am now
coming to speak of in the

4 Part.

IV. Part of the Text, viz. The prejudice
that the Apostle tells them they had been
apt to receive, while they were children
in the Faith: And this he sets forth by
Two very remarkable Expressions.

The first is *κλυδωνιζόμενοι*, tossed to and fro,
like waves of the Sea. Another Apostle
Jude 13. calls the Seducers, *κύματα γγία πάλαισσοντας*,
raging Waves of the Sea, both in regard of
the boisterousness of their motion, and that
trouble and prejudice that they give to those
that pass through them. And here this A-
postle sets forth the condition of those that
are seduced, by this term *κλυδωνιζόμενοι*,
tossed to and fro, as a Ship amidst the Waves
of the Sea. *Eleganter miseram eorum trepi-
dationem exprimit*, &c. saith *Calvin in locum*,
He very elegantly sets forth the uncertain
and wavering condition of seduced people,
by this Metaphor of a Ship at Sea, in a tem-
pestuous time: For as such a Ship is tossed
by the merciless Wind and Waves, so that
neither the counsel nor strength of the Pilot
or Mariners can guide it; Even such is the
condition of them that are tossed by the
winds of strange Doctrin: All the counsel
and advice of Friends and Teachers, yea
all the strength of good Laws and Govern-
ment, cannot prevail to steer them in a
right course, but the unruly winds of false
Doctrin

Doctrin, and false Teachers, like raging waves of the Sea, do hurry them up and down at their pleasures, and to their extreme hazzard, all this while. As a Ship in a tempestuous Sea is in great danger of shipwrack, and it is very doubtful whether ever it will safely arrive at its desired haven: So these seduced persons are in a very great and apparent danger of their souls; though the almighty power of God be able to rescue them as a Lamb out of the mouth of a Lion, yet I say for the present they are in a condition of very great hazzard.

The second word is πεπιφερόμενος, carried about. *Comparat eos vel stipulis, vel aliis rebus infirmis, &c.* saith Calv. in loc. As twigs are bended every way with the wind, and chaff and straw, and such like matter that is light and lies loose, are easily driven to and fro with it; Even so persons that are but as weak twigs, will bow and bend to a compliance with every strange Opinion; when strong Trees, that are well rooted in the Faith, will sooner break then bend. Those that lie loose and unsettled, and withal are of a light and less solid temper, are blown up and down like chaff, while those that are weighty and good Corn, lie still in the floor.

How greatly therefore will it concern us all, to endeavour to be solid and settled in the Faith, that we may be secured in these trouble-

troublesometimes, when there are so many blustering winds of strange Doctrin abroad, to try our stability. And this calls me to the

5 Part.

V. Part of the Text, viz. The instrument of this great mistake, which he sets forth in these words, *μῆλη ἀνέμων τῆς θιδαστρογλίας*, the winds of strange Doctrine. New fancied and false Doctrines may fitly be compared to the Wind.

1. As to the original of them both. The Arist. 2. Wind is conceived to be an Exhalation a-Meteor. rising out of the Caverns of the Earth, c.4. And false Doctrines are Exhalations arising out of the bottomless pit, sent forth by that infernal Æolus, at the command of an angry Juno: Raised, I say, by the Prince of darkness (though in the shape of New Lights); permitted by the wise and just pro-vidence of God, whom we have thereunto provoked by our sins.

2. As to the substance of them: the Wind is so leight and fluid a body, that it escapes our sight, nor are we well able to tell what it is. Such are false doctrines, though they make a great noise and bustle, so as to fill the world, as the Wind doth, yet are they indeed (if well looked into) but vain and empty nothings, contending to appear as something extraordinary to men of com-mon apprehensions.

3. As to the effects of them: *Pulchra Meta-*

Metaphora, dum omnes hominum doctrinas, &c.
saith *Calvin in locum*, It is an elegant Metaphor, whereby the Apostle compares all the novel Doctrines of men to the Wind: for, as the Wind doth remove things from their places, and tosteth them to and fro; so false doctrines do tend to unsettle us, and remove us from the Faith, whereas the intent of the Word of Truth, is to root men and settle them in the Faith. And hereunto I may add, that as the Wind, though a leight and fluid body, yet hath a very great strength and force in it: so false doctrines, though in themselves lighter then vanity, yet are very powerful to amuse and unsettle mens mindes from their former profession.

4. As to the uncertainty of them: *Adhuc, incertam, dubiam, falsam doctrinam, confert Paulus cum vento, &c.* saith *Sarcerius in locum*, The Apostle compares false doctrines to the Wind for their uncertainty and doubtfulness. Nothing more variable then the Wind, and nothing more uncertain then they that have once left the Foundation of their first Faith to embrace *Novelties*. And further, saith he, this expression denotes the imperpetuity, and short continuance of errors. The Truth shall endure for ever, like the Heavens; but Error shall vanish like the Wind, when it hath spent its boisterous blasts, as long as the most

most wise God sees fit. False doctrines then, as you have heard, are like the Wind: But these Winds have an *Aëolus* that sends them abroad, and manageth them to the mischief of mankind. And this leads us to the

6, Part. Sixth, and last thing in the Text, viz. the *Authours* or foundation of this great mischief, set forth in these words, τὴν κυβελίαν τὸν ἀνθρώπων, εἰς παντελίαν τὸν μεστιαν τῆς πλάνης, we render it, not improperly, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lye in wait to deceive. Beza renders it, *In hominum alea, per veterotoriam ad infidiose fallendum versutiam*: which I would thus translate, By the cogging of men, and their pestilent craftiness whereby they endeavour to betray men into the snares of error. Tremellius, out of the Syriack, reads it thus: *Ad omnem ventum doctrinarum versutarum filiorum hominis, qui per astutiam suam se se componunt ut fallant.* By the wind of subtil doctrines of the sons of men, who by their subtily do compose themselves to deceive others. Our Doctor Hammond, in his Marginal Note, reads it, By the subtily of men, through their craftiness for the contriving of deceit: which seemis to me to come nearest to the sense of the words in the Greek. All these versions concurr in the substance; and shew us that there is a great deal of subtily and cogging, which Seducers

do

do make use of in order to the beguiling of ignorant and unstable Souls. *Kubēia* from κύβος, a Dye, may signify cogging. Some would make this construction of it: *Ut hic per aleam intelligantur incerti illi casus, quibus Marlorat. jaciantur homines, &c.* As nothing is more moveable than a Dye, so nothing more uncertain and wavering than the mindes of erronious persons. But I rather incline to them that say, *Per aleam intelligitur aleatoria quedam vafrities,* Such craft as is used by Gamesters in cogging the Dice. So *Calvin* and *Bullinger* in locum. *Alludens ad luso-rum quorundam artes, &c.* He alludes to the cogging of Gamesters, whereby they cheat those that play with them. False teachers have an art of cogging with the Holy Scriptures, to make them seem to fall to their own minde, and to maintain their own Opinions, and thereby they easily impose upon those they have to deal withal. For there is such a reverence in the mindes of well-disposed persons, towards the Authority of the Scriptures, as being the Word of the God of Truth, that they are presently induced to receive with a great deal of respect and zeal, whatsoever appears to them to be grounded upon the Word of God. And therefore it is that Seducers do take this course, as that which they have alwayes by experience found to be very effectual.

Yea

Yea further, saith *Calvin*, *Huc accedit,*
quod ad struendas infidias excubant. They are
 said to lye in wait to deceive. Which notes the
 vigilance and unwearied diligence that false
 teachers use, to catch poor Souls into snares.
 They humble themselves, and stoop, and
 creep, and comply, to intise men into their
 snares, even as *Vitellius* in the Historian, who
 is said, *projicere oscula, &c. & quicquam fa-*
cere pro Imperio, that he would prostitute his
 Salutations, and Embraces to gain mens
 hearts to own him as Emperour: Or as
Absalom, who hugged the people and kissed
 them, and gave them good words when they
 came to him; complaining of the King his
 Father, and promising them great matters
 when he shoule come to the Kingdom,
 2 Sam. and by these arts he stole away the hearts of
 15. the men of Israel. Even so these Seducers do
 humble themselves, and give fair words to
 those that follow them: they complain of
 great disorders in the Church of England, and
 promise them strange things, if they will but
 come over to their Sect or Party: and by
 such arts they lay in wait to steal away the
 hearts of simple people. Yea, they spare
 no pains, but, as our Saviour saith of the
 Mar. 23. Pharisees, *They compass Sea and Land, to*
 15. *gain one Proselyte to their opinions.*

Now as this shews the inveterate malice,
 and subtily of that old Serpent, who hath
 been

been so long versed in the accursed art of subverting mens Souls : So it should teach us *cautiousness*, that we endeavour to equal the vigilancy of our enemies that lye in wait to deceive, by being as vigilant to prevent their deceits. *Que omnia excitare & acnere studium nostrum debent*, &c. faith *Calvin* upon this occasion. All this should stir up and whet our industry and watchfulness, lest by neglecting to study the Word of God, and to stand fast in the Truths thereof, we be circumvented by our enemies, and suffer the sad punishment of our sloth and security.

And whereas one great help against stratagems is a *suspicious* minde, and diligent inquiring where and how they are laid, (for such desigues, when *discovered*, are in a fair way to be *disappointed*:) It may therefore be a great help to us against the subtillity of these men that lie in wait to deceive us, not to be over-*credulous*, or prone to believe every man that comes unto us with fair pretences. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, nor every one that pretends to the spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God, because 'tis too evident that there are many false Prophets gone out into the world.* And that we may the better be acquainted with their subtleties and deceits: I shall lay before you some *charaders* that will shew men not to be sent from God, whatsoever they pretend, but
that

that they lie in wait meekly to deceive us: That so on whomsoever we see these Marks, we may know them so as to avoid them, and their delusions.

I. Those that apply themselves rather to *perswade* the Affections, then to *convince* the Judgement. The Understanding was by God appointed to be the leader of the other faculties of the soul: whereas we ordinarily say, that *Love is blind*, and the same we may say of *Hatred*, and all the rest of the Affections; and consequently the Understanding ought first to be informed of the goodness or evil of any thing, before the Affections be set on, either to love or abhor it. And therefore we may well conclude, that they who attempt to win mens affections by persuasions, before they have convinced the judgment by weighty and cogent reasons, doe take a very indirect course, *to come in at the window and not at the door* of the soul: And that either they are *blind leaders of these blind affections*; or else that, having more knowledge then honesty themselves, their designe is to impose upon the simple honesty of well-meaning people. A way of *popular oratory*, mixed with plausible and earnest exclamations, and pathetical obtestations, is indeed very apt to prevail with men of lively affections, and dull understandings: But they that take such courses, may be suspected as those that intend

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to draw men into their net by low-belling.

2. If men wholly *decry* the judgment of Reason in matters of Religion, they afford us very strong grounds to suspect them. It is true, that many points of our Faith are so high, that they *transcend* the reach of Reason; onely we can see it reasonable to receive those points, upon the authority of the God of Truth, though our understandings come short of fathoming the depth of them: But we may speak it for the honour of our Christian Religion, that it presents nothing to our Faith to be received, which is contrary to the principles of well-improved Reason. And therefore those that have the face to tell us, that we must receive things from them, and from I know not what *light within*; and, if reason contradict it, we must lay it aside as an humane and carnal business; yea, if a plain and rational interpretation of Scripture oppose them, we must reject that also as the Letter, and not the Spirit: What is this, but in plain terms to tell us, that they come on purpose to blindfold us, that they may lead us whither they list, and that it is but fit we should subject our eyes to that cover they offer to put upon them.

3. If men pretend to be infallible, and make it their common course in cool blood

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(if

(if ever they be so) to brazen it out, and make the world to believe, that whosoever opposeth them, must needs be in an error, they give us just occasion to suspect their designe. We have a great deal of talk in the world concerning Antichrist, and what a dangerous Body he is: and as to the person or people that deserve this name, we may say as Christ did of the true Christ, they shall say, *loe here is Christ, and loe there*; many say, *lo this is Antichrist, and others cry, loe that is Antichrist*, till the vainest sort of them have come to that pass as to believe whatsoever is contrary to their own Way and Sect, to be *Antichristian*. Now, if we condemn this as one of the most unreasonable and dangerous Tenets that are professed by the *Roman Antichrist*; then why should we not reckon them to be of *Antichristian* spirits, that will not believe that it is possible they should be deceived?

4. If men will usurp the office of publick Teachers, and will not submit themselves to an orderly tryal by them that have judgment and authority to take an account of them, they give us just ground to suspect them as deceivers, instead of instructors of the ignorant. The Apostle tells us, that

- 1 Cor. 14.* the spirits of the Prophets, are subject to the
32. Prophets. And that the publick Teachers
1 Tim. 3. should first be proved before they be admitted
150. to take upon them to teach. And therefore

sore as this surly Tener of refusing to be subject to the trial and approbation of others, doth at the first view, discover it self to be the product of pride and height of stomach; so it is a tigne, that these persons have a designe to put off very bad wares to the people, seeing they will not suffer them to be brought to the light to be examined.

5. Those that spend more time and diligence in pressing men to embrace their *Tenets* and opinions, then in exhorting them to the duties of *holiness* towards God, and *righteousness* towards men, are very suspicious in their proceedings. As Christ bids all of us, to *Seek first his Kingdom, and the righteousness thereof*; so every profitable Teacher should make it his first and chiefest design to persuade men to become Subjects of this Kingdom, and to lead lives answerable to their profession. And therefore those that spend their pains chiefly in teaching men to renounce their Teachers, and to separate themselves from the society of the Church, to follow their new-fangle ways, give us just ground to suspect that they desire to *baptize men into their own name*; that they are self-seekers, such as are setting up for themselves to establish a *Sect* of their own: and that they have rather a design to draw men to themselves than to God, preferring their own credit, or something else that is worse, before the glory of God. Q. 2 6. Those

*Mat. 6.
33.*

*1 Cor. 1.
15.*

Q. 2

6. Those

Rom. 2.
22.

Mat. 22.
38.
Mat. 5.
19.
Sermon on
Acts 26.
9.

6. Those that spend more Zeal in crying out against *indifferent* things, then in reprob ing apparent *ungodliness*, may justly be suspected by us: *Theu that abhorrest Idols* (saith the Apostle) *dost thou commit Sacrilege?* It is true, that in respect of the Authority of him that commands, there is no small commandment, and the breach of any of Gods Laws is a great sin: But yet in respect of the nature of the Command, Christ sometimes speaks of *a first and great Commandment*, and sometimes of *one of the least Commandments*: and he that is scrupulous in smaller matters, and careless in greater, doth betray himself to have a diseased Con science, as I have elsewhere shewed. And therefore those that Cry out with such a loud and bitter cry, against things which, in the judgement of the soberest of themselves, are in their own Nature *indifferent*, as if they were palpable *Idolatry*; and yet have made no bones of *sacrilege, injustice, and shedding of innocent blood*, it is a shrewd sign that they are *Seducers*, and have a design to impose upon us.

7. Those that contradict the sense of the Church of God in all ages, are to be suspected as *Innovators*, and that their opinions are rather *new then good*. It is true that the antiquity of an error doth not excuse it, for there have been errors in the Church, ever since the time of the Apostles:

Apostles : But yet the constant judgement of the Church of God in all Ages, concerning any point in *controversie*, or concerning the meaning of any controverted *Scripture*, gives us good encouragement to believe it, and to disbelieve them that oppose it : because it is not probable that our gracious God would leave his Church in the dark, through so many ages, and never discover the Truth till now of late.

8. Lastly, we may know them from the direction that God himself gives us, Deut. 18. ult. *VVhen a Prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass ; that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously : thou shalt not be affraid of him.* Those that pretend to a gift of prophecy, as many have done in our age (though they should by often shooting at random, hit the Mark sometimes, yet) if they miss in anything that they foretel (as we have seen it in our frequent experience) this is a sure sign, that the Lord hath not sent them, but they speak of their own heads : and we have reason to fear, that they have not onely belyed the Lord, in saying, *Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken*, but also that they have had Jer. 23:31. a further design, even to entice us to the

embracing of their errours by these pretences.

Upon whomsoever we see any of these Marks, we have reason to suspect them to be of those that lye in wait to deceive: and therefore should avoid them, and take Solomons counsel, to Cease, or forbear, to hear the instruction that tends to cause us to err from the ways of Wisdom.

Prov. 19.
27.

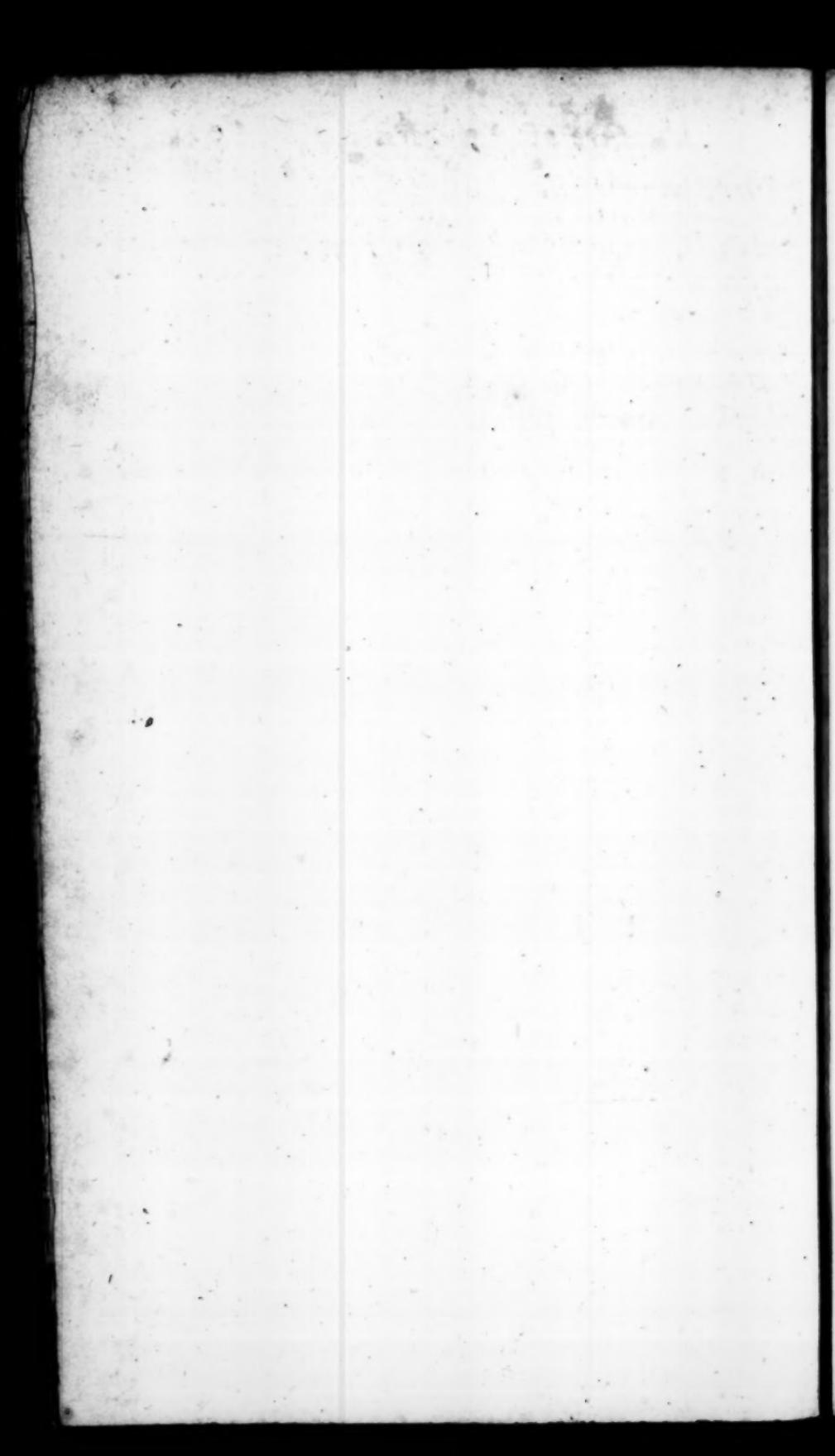
To conclude, I shall give you a recapitulation of what hath been spoken, a little varying from my former Method. You have heard (1.) That there are many Winds of false doctrine stirring, to try who are stable. (2.) That Seducers use a great deal of subtily and diligence, lying in wait to deceive. (3.) That a great number are by them tossed to and fro, and carried about. (4.) That even those that are of honest affections and good lives, are in danger of being ensnared by them; and therefore he that thinketh he standeth, should take heed lest he fall. (5.) That especially those that are children, and weak in knowledge, are in great danger, and consequently that we should labour to be men and not children in understanding. (6.) Lastly, that God hath appointed the Office of the Ministry, in the Church, as a special preservation from errors.

Joh. 5. Now the Lord, of his Mercy, grant to all of us Grace and Wisdom to search the Scri-

Scriptures, and to try the spirits whether they ¹ Joh. 4.
be of God : and to hold fast the Faith and a ^{1.}
good Conscience, now when so many have made ¹ Tim. 1.
shipwreck of both : that so we may not be ^{19.}
drawn away with the error of the wicked to ² Pet. 3.
depart from our own steadfastness ; but may grow ^{17, 18.}
in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Je-
sus Christ. Grant this, O Lord, (we be-
seech thee) through the Merits of thy dear
Son, and the working of thy Holy Spirit.

To which glorious Trinity, God the
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be
all Honour and Glory, world
without end. Amen.

F I N I S.





H ἀνθετος Σοφια.

OR,
Heavenly WISDOM described
By its Seven
PROPERTIES.

James 3.17.

*But the Wisdom that is from above,
is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,
easie to be entreated, full of Mercy
and good Fruits, without partiali-
ty, and without hypocrisie.*



Wisdom is the soul of Nature, the eye of the Soul, the light of the Eye, the sun of that Light : the copy of Heaven, the standard of the Earth ; the helm of Reason, the guardian of Life, the glory of Men, the mirror of

of Angels, the shadow or reflection of God himself, who is, as the Psalmist speaks,
 Psal. 104. 2. כָּלְמָה אֹור כַּשְׁלָמָה *covered with Light as with a Garment.* It is Wisdom that makes a man Denizon of the upper, Regent of the lower World, correspondent of both: Without which, we should be but clods of moving Earth, steep'd to dirt in Phlegm, and kneaded into humane shape.

This general term, *Wisdom*, divides it self (*ut analogum in sua analogata*) into worldly Policy, moral Prudence, and Christian Wisdom. *Worldly Policy* trades in the World as its City, from whence it seems to take its name. Now all that is in the world, is ei-

ther ζητευία τῆς σαρδὸς or ζητευία τῶν ὀρθαγμάτων, or else αἰλαζοσία τῆς βίου. Pleasures, Profits, or Honours. That which designes riches as its end, our Apostle calls οἰκεῖας earthly; that which designes pleasures, he calls ψυχικὸν, sensual; that which designes honour, he stiles δαιμονιώδες, Devilish, because it imitates that great sin of the Devil, Pride. And of all worldly wisdom in general, St. Paul pronounceth, that

Cor. 3. 19. it is μωρία παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ foolishness before God.

Moral Prudence, whether we take it for a practical Virtue, or for an intellectual Habit, is so excellent and useful a thing, that we may truly say of it, that *Without prudence, neither the mind nor actions can be good.*

Prov. 19.

2.

Christi-

Christian Wisdom, which our Apostle in the Text calls, ἡ ἀνθετικὴ σοφία, the *Wisdom which is from above*, hath many that are pretenders to it; but few, that are candidates of it: And as concerning the excellency and value of this *Wisdom*, we may say with Job, Job 28.
 לא יתנוּ סנוּר תְּחִתָּה וְלֹא יִשְׁקַל כִּסְף מְחוּרָה 15.
 It cannot be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the price of it: So by reason of the boldness of those that pretend to *Wisdom*, we may take up that which he saith before (Vehachachmah meaijn timarze, vers. 13. veeh zeh mequom binah,) *Where shall Wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?* Many men lay such confident claims to *Wisdom*, that it is very difficult to judge on whose side the Verdict will pass.

Such were the *Gnosticks* of old (a Sect very rise and pernicious in the beginning of the Christian Church) against whom to fortifie those to whom he writes, seems to be the chief designe of the Apostle in this Epistle. And more particularly at vers. 13. of this Chapter, he calls them to a tryal of their title to *Wisdom*, τίς σοφός ἐστιν ἐν ὑμῖν; *who is the wise man amongst you?* Or, Who are they that are the great pretenders to *Wisdom*? Let them come and shew their wisdom, by the fruits of it: *Let them shew out of a good Conversation their fruits with meekness and wisdom.* But, saith he, I fear there are to be found, especially among

among you *Gnostiicks*, those fruits that never grew upon the Tree of saving Knowledge :
 vers.14. For, οὐ ζήλον πικρόν ἔχετε καὶ σειδεῖαν, If ye have bitter envying and strife among you, it is but vain glory, and lying against the Truth, to term your selves such men of knowledge : For envy and strife, are not the fruits of Heavenly Knowledge, but of that worldly Wisdom, which is earthly, sensual, devilish ;
 vers.15. and is the cause of confusion (tumulc or unquietness) ανταστασίας, and in a word, of every evil work. Whereas, η ἀνωδέν τροπία, the Wisdom that is from above is of another nature, and brings forth other manner of fruits, in the words I have before read unto you. But the Wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be entreated ; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisie.

In which words (Chachmoth baanetha bethah, chatzebah hammudehaa shibbah)
 Prov.9. Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewen
 1. out her seven Pillars. The Palace of Wisdom, is, like that of the Sun,

— *sublimibus alta columnis,*

very lofty and magnificent ; it is ανωδέν, frome above. If any ask, Where shall true Wisdom be found ? And, where is the place of Understanding ? Behold here is her House. And these are the seven Pillars upon which it is built. Πρώτον μέγα γνῶν, It is first pure, or holy.

holy. Ἐπύτα τιμητικόν, it is secondly peaceable. Thirdly, ὀμοικών, gentle. Fourthly, ἀγαθός, easie to be perswaded, or of an obedient temper. Fifthly, μεσὸν ἔλεος καὶ καρπῶν ἀγάθων, full of mercy and good fruits. Sixthly, ἀδιαχρίτος, without partiality, or without wrangling, or disputing, as the Margent hath it; or, as some render it, without wavering. Seventhly, ἀνυπόχετος, without hypocrisy.

While I survey this Palace of Wisdom, and take a view of the Pillars upon which it is built, I am bold to beg your serious and candid attention.

The name of *Wisdom* sounds so laudably, that there is hardly any man so far from Wisdom, but he is a pretender to it: Most men contend either to know more, or at least to be thought to know more, than their Neighbours. In a word, all men are *Gnosticks*, they have perswaded themselves, and are very earnest in perswading the world that *they are a knowing people*; that, no doubt, *themselves are the people, and that Wisdom shall die with them*. Job.12. 2^o The Suit hath been so long depending, that it is high time it were brought to an Issue; and that the Evidences were impartially examined, which each man hath to shew for himself. And, as in most controversies, if men could be perswaded to lay aside *passion and prejudice*, they might easily be judges of their own cause:

cause: so in this great Contest, who are the wisest men, and take the best course, if men would lay aside passion and prejudice, they might themselves easily judge from this Text, who they are that have met with true Wisdom.

Wisdoms House. He that desires to find any person, must ordinarily go to his house to seek for him; Now the house of Wisdom is *above*, from above: it is like the heavenly Jerusalem;

Apoc.21. 2. which St. John saw κατακαινων αὐτὸς ἐξ ῥύπου, coming down from God out of Heaven;

prov.2.6. v.7. For, *The Lord giveth Wisdom, and out of his mouth proceedeth Knowledge and Understanding.* And the Wisdom that he gives, prompts a man to look upward for his joy and portion; and to look up unto God, and acknowledge Him the Authour and Giver of that Wisdom which he hath. Here then is the Palace where Wisdom dwells.

Psal.48. 12. But, *Let us walk about this Sion, and go round about her, and tell the Pillars thereof,* that we may see whether we have the counter-part of this Fabrick erected in our souls, and consequently, whether true Wisdom hath entred into our hearts or no.

I Pillar. The first Pillar of the House of Wisdom is Purity. Πρῶτον μὲν ἀγνῆ, it is first pure or chaste, free from those impure lusts, with which the Gnosticks were defiled; though pre-

pretending to an higher measure of knowledge than other men were Masters of. To man God said, Behold (jirath adonai hi chachmah) the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; (vesur merang binah) and to depart from evil, that is Understanding. And (reshith chachmah jirath Jehovah) the fear of the Lord is the beginning, the very foundation, of Wisdom: and who are they that are to be accounted men of a good understanding? but (col hahoshem) all they; and onely they, that keep his Commandments, and lead their lives according to the directions of his Word; they onely are men of Wisdom.

St. Gregory Nazianzene saith very divinely, *Greg.*
The first and chiefest Wisdom is a good and Naz. o-
*laudable life, purified, and in some measure *rat. 10.**
answerable to the purity that is in the most
Holy God; who accepts of purity alone in
stead of, and before all other sacrifices:
Which (saith he) the Scripture calleth a
contrite heart, a sacrifice of praise, the new
creature in Christ, the new man, and such
like names. And elsewhere the same Fa-
*ther speaking to *Hero* the Philosopher, saith, *Orat. 23.**
This is the true Wisdom and the true No-
*bility, that makes us truly honourable and *the Philo-**
raise-worthy; which hath the seal of pu-
rity and good manners upon it; which en-
deavoureth to carry us up to God the
chiefest good, and thereby sheweth a true
nobility of Spirit.

R

Purity

Purity must needs be the fruit, or property of *Heavenly Wisdom*.

First, because the ways of Holiness are the safest and best course which a man can take even in respect of *this life*. *I Wisdom*

Prov. 8. *dwell with Prudence*: Now Prudence looks round about in what it doth: And he that looks well about him, cannot but by *Faith* see him that is invisible to the bodily eyes:

Prov. 15. *that the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the Evil and the Good*. Now that which the light of Nature sheweth us of the omnipresence and omniscience of him that is an infinite and immens Being, and who daily upholdeth and ordereth all

Heb. 1. 2. *things in the VVorld, by the Word of his Power*; did prompt even *Seneca* the Moralist to

Eph. 8. 3. give this good counsel: *Sic certe vivendum est, tanquam in conspectu vivamus; sc cogitandum, tanquam aliquis in peccus intimum inspicere possit: Et potest quidem. Quid enim prodest, hominibus aliquid esse secretum? nihil Deo clusum est.* It is the best course always to live so as remembing that we have eyes upon us; yea, so to order our very Thoughts, as if they were seen: and so they are. For, though men cannot, yet, God doth see them, from whom nothing is hid. And if natural Reason did prompt men to take heed to their ways, how much more should Religion teach us this lesson? This restrained *Joseph* from embracing impure and un-

unlawful pleasures, when he had the most inviting opportunity to tempt him to them.

How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And from cruelty and injustice, Gen. 39. 9. when he had both might and authority to bear him out in it. *This do and live, for I fear God.* Gen. 42. 18.

And we may add hereunto, that as there is no greater torment than that which proceeds from consciousness of an evil life, and dishonest heart: so there is no greater comfort on this side Heaven, than the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity 2 Cor. 1: and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in this world: So that, even as to this life, a pure and holy conversation is most prudent and agreeable to the dictates of VVisdom.

Secondly, it is much the safest with respect to the life to come. *The wise mans eyes* Eccl. 2. are in his head, he sees things at a distance as well as those that are near at hand: And the VVisdom that is from above will tell us, that we must all appear before the Judgement- 2 Cor. 5. seat of Christ, to give an account of those things 10. which we have done in the body, and to receive a reward according to them, whether they be good or evil. And that he that hath sown to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, whereas he that hath sown to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And therefore true VVisdom cannot but account it a

Gal. 6. 8.

Rom. 6. 22. mans best and most prudential course to bear fruits of holiness here, that at last it may have the end, even life everlasting.

If we reflect upon this first property of Wisdom, we shall easily be prompted to inferr,

1. That if the Wisdom that is from above be πρῶτον μὲν ἀγαθόν, if it be the first property of Wisdom, to be pure, then they stand convict of palpable and extream folly, that are of impure and wicked hearts and lives. The Integrity of *Cato*, the Justice of *Aristides*, and other eminent Virtues in many of the Heathens, were very remarkable to the shame of too many that are called Christians,

August. as St. *Augustine* saith, *Quād multos Philoso-*
Ep. 14². phorum & audivimus & legimus, &c.

How many of the Philosophers have we heard of, and read of, and seen, to be chaste and patient, modest and liberal, abstinent and bountiful, despisers of the honours and delights of the world, and lovers of Justice as well as Knowledge? And if these men without the knowledge of the Scriptures did these things, how shall those Christians be condemned, who are better taught, but do

Chrysost. Hom. 18. *Quae non tormenta patiemur, &c?* What tor-
 in cap. 5. inents shall not those Christians undergo, Mat.

who being commanded to exceed the Scribes and Pharisees in righteousness, do yet come short of the Heathens? How, I pray you, shall

shall such men see the Kingdom of God ?
Yea, the very *Satyrist* may shame the in-
justice and lewdness of many Christians,
who tells us, that this is the best and most
acceptable Sacrifice to the Gods,

*Compositum jus fasque animo, sanctique re- Persius
cessus*

Sat. 2.

Mentis, & incolum generoso peccus honesto.

A just and honest heart, and a life that is an-
swerable, is so acceptable to the gods, that,
as he there addeth,

*Hec cedo ut admoveam superis, & furre
litabo.*

The meanest oblation, even a poor Barley-
cake offered by such an one, shall sooner be
accepted then thousands of Rams, and ten ^{Prov. 15.}
thousands of Rivers of Oyl from the wicked ^{8.}
whose Sacrifice is an abomination before the
Lord.

2. This argues that they are but superfi-
cially wise, that onely talk of purity, but do
not practise it. Who talk as if they had
partook of the cloven tongues, but walk as
if they were supported with cloven feet.

Qui Curios simulant & Bacchanalia vivunt. Juven.

Sat. 26.

VWho speak like Saints, but live like jinners.

R 3

Et

— *Et de virtute locuti
Clunem agitant.* —

That read hard Lectures of Piety and strictnes to others, and bind heavy burdens Mat.23.4 to lay upon other mens shoulders, but themselves will not touch them with one of their fingers.

3. This convinceth them of the highest folly, that make knowledge and pretence of Piety, an encouragement to impurity and dishonesty : as if that were lawful for them which is unlawful for others : or as if they had gotten so far into favour with God Almighty, that he had given them an Indulgence to do what they list. St. Augustine Civ. Dei tells us, that the Stoicks who place felicity l.5. c.20. in virtue (to shame such as approved virtue, but applyed all to bodily delight) did use to delineate a Picture wherein Pleasure sitteth on a Throne as a delicate Queen, and all the Virtues stand about her to serve her : Prudence must contrive a way whereby Pleasure may reign in safety : Fortitude must defend the body from fear or feeling of sufferings , and each of the other Virtues must employ it self for the service of Lady Pleasure. And as the Father saith, *Nihil vilius, &c.* Than such a Picture nothing can be more vile and deformed. And such are they, who place pleasure and profit in the throne

throne of their hearts, and set Religion as the Hand-maid to wait on it, and either to cloak all its projects, or else excuse them. Than this, nothing can be more odious, and nothing more contrary to true Wisdom. For these, while they pretend to the building of the House of Wisdom, do take away the first and main Pillar, *Purity*. From the viewing of which, let us now move forward to the

Second Pillar in this Building viz. *Peace*- 2. Pillar. *ableness.* οἰνεία ἀπνεία, it is next peaceable. St. Paul placeth Peace before holiness: *Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see God.* Heb. 12. 14. This Apostle inverteth the Order, and placeth first *Purity*, and next *Peaceableness* as Pillars in the House of Wisdom: whence we may note, how the Spirit of God doth intertwist Holiness and Peace, and Peace and Holiness, making them inseparable in a Christian; to the great shame of them, who set up the one to the overthrowing of the other. St. Gregory Nazianzen, to set forth the excellency of Peace, sheweth how all things in Nature conspire to agree, which tends to their mutual preservation; whereas discord tends to ruine. And elsewhere, in exhorting to modesty in disputations, he saith that, Nothing is more beautiful and profitable than Peace, and nothing more odious and troublesome than discord. And

R 4

in

Greg.

Naz.

Orat. 15.

Orat. 22.

Greg.
 Naz. De
 Fide.
 Phil. 4.9.
 Isa. 9.6.
 Mat. 3.10.
 Joh. 14.
^{27.}
 Epis. 4.3.
 2 Thes. 4.
^{11.}
 Rom. 12.
^{18.}
 2 Sam. 22.
^{19.}

in his *Tract de Fide*, he saith, that Nothing is more precious then Peace. That God who made us, is called the *God of Peace*. Christ that redeemed us, is called the *Prince of Peace*. The Holy Ghost that sanctifieth us, descended in the shape of a Dove, as an emblem of Peace. Our Saviour when he ascended on high, left Peace as his last Legacy to his people: His Apostles do frequently exhort us to peace; to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace; to study to be quiet; and if it be possible, as far as lyeth in us, to live peaceably with all men. All which is sufficient to convince us, that they that would deserve the reputation of Wisdom, must by all means approve themselves of the number of those that are quiet and peaceable in the land.

What then shall we say to those boisterous Nimrods, those sons of Thunder and Whirl-wind, that can never endure to see Janus's Temple shut? Certainly, though they be endued with a large portion of that policy, which is Earthly and Devilish, they have but little of this Wisdom that is from above. Indeed peace is so valuable, or rather unvaluable a Jewel, that it is a wonder that any man should be so brutishly unreasonable as to cast it away; except he was either born in *perniciem humani generis*, begotten and born in spight to the world; or else doth hope to fish to his best advantage when

when the waters are troubled.' The *Histo-*
Tacitus, *rian* faith of *Agrippina*, *Dare filio Imperium Annal.*
potuit, tolerare Imperantem non potuit: She
l.12.
 was desirous to set her son in the Throne,
 but could not endure his Government, when
 he was made Emperor: And such is the per-
 verseeness of many peoples spirits, that they
 could rather be willing to believe them-
 selves to have set up or *restored* a Prince,
 then to obey him when he is set up.

Nor will men of troublesome spirits and
 plausible tongues, want for specious pre-
 tences to colour their detestable practises.
 Sometimes they pretend great *faults* in
 those that are *instruments* in Government:
 just like those of whom *Tiberius* in *Tacitus Annal.l.3*
 speaks, *Nonnulli accusare tantum vitia vo-*
lunt: deinde cum gloriam ejus rei adepti sunt,
similitates faciunt: Many men seek for ap-
 plause in the world, not by amending their
 own lives, but by crying out against the
 faults of others: and when they have got-
 ten this applause, they make use of it to
 raise Sedition. And certainly, this way of
 accusing others, is very apt to take much
 with the common people; as the same ju-
 dicious *Historian* observes. *Ambitionem scrip-*
Tacitus,
toris facile adverseris, &c. Men are natu-
l.1.
 rally prone to nauseat him that is too prodi-
 gal in commanding another, but a detra-
 tor is eagerly heard; because, the panegyrick
 smells of self-ends, but he that speaks
 evil

evil of another, seems to incautious people to have a better design.

Sometimes again, we shall hear them pretend I know not what *liberty*, as if the want of that were the occasion of their discontent: And as *Tacitus* saith, *Libertas & speciosa nomina prætexuntur*, &c. Liberty and such like words, are but specious pretences; nor did ever any man attempt to enslave others, but that he pretended liberty. And it hath been too truly observed of such persons, what *Tigellinus* in the *Historian* speaks falsely of others, *Ut imperium evertant, libertatem præferunt: postquam everterint, ipsam invisuri.* Those that have pretended the liberty of Parliament and People, to the reproaching and overthrowing a well settled Monarchy; as soon as they had done that, have been the greatest invaders of those liberties which they pleaded for.

*Tacitus
Annal.
l. 16.*

Sometimes they plead for a Reformation in matters of Religion, which if it were carried on as far as the shoulders of these great Talkers would be able to bear it, yet would it not give satisfaction even to themselves: But as *Tiberius* speaks about the Sumptuary Laws, *In conviviis & circulis incusari ista, & modum posci*, &c. It is easie for men in their meetings and tippling-bouts, to find fault with this and that, and the other thing, and to wish for a Reformation of them, and to condemn their Governours

ours because it is not done ; whereas if these things were done, at least some of these persons would be the first to find themselves aggrieved therewith. Which argues, that these large talks do not proceed from a *true* zeal after a *reformation* of what is amiss, but from an *itching humour* after novelties and disturbances. For, as the *Historian* observeth of the estate of *Rome* at some times, *Periculosa severitas, flagitiosa largitio, seu Tacitus omnia militi seu nihil concesseris, in anticipiti Annal. republicâ,* Whether a Prince grant none or mens desires, or grant all, they are still of the same temper : and oft times the gratifying of them in some needless things, doth but encrease their thirst, and make them bolder to ask, and more hard to be satisfied.

Thus, I say, unquiet spirits will never want pretences to colour their turbulency : But these are meer pretences. What then shall we say of these men ? Shall we say with *David, Scatter O Lord, the people that delight in war ?* Or wish them with *Cyrus, to be once glutted with blood,* who delight in *Justin.* blood ? No, far be it from us, to have a zeal as hot as fire; to call for fire from Heaven, even upon those that would gladly set us all in a flame. We rather wish they may shew themselves such men of wisdom as they pretend to be : and may learn to shew forth that wisdom which is from above, which

which is not onely *pure*, but *peaceable* also.
From hence let us proceed,

3 Pillar. Thirdly, to view the next Pillar in this Palace, and that is *Peaceableness*. This Wisdom is ἐπιεικῆς gentle: ἐπιεικία (saith a Dr. Ham. Learned and judicious *Annotator*) is the ordinary word of the Philosophers, and taken from them by the Lawyers, to signifie the mitigation of exact and strict Justice, when the execution of it is not so agreeable to the Rules of *Charity*. And so it notes in general the fit and proper temper that is to be obserued in all things. *Hesychius* saith, ἐπιεικές is τὸ καθήκον, πρέταρον, περιστάνον, ικαρδία, that which is fit, decent, or due. This general word is several wayes applied in divers places of Scripture. In this Text, the word *peaceable* that goes before it, and other words of the same Nature attending it, advise us to construe it, *a readiness to recede from our own strict right in order to Peace*. In this sense the Apostle exhorts Ministers especially to be *gentle*. And all men also to labour after this frame of Spirit. In which places he opposeth gentleness to a contentious strictness, in standing upon our own Right to the prejudice of Peace. And indeed, Peace being so excellent a Jewel, as I have before shewed; Wisdom, but especially that which is from above, will perswade a man to part with much, to purchase this pearl of price. Beside, that God who is infinite

2 Tim. 2.

24.

Tit. 3.2.

finite in Wisdom, is said to be gentle: (chanva-
thekah carbeni) *Thy gentleness hath made me great.* Christ who is the Wisdom of the Father, is gentle: I exhort you ~~σιδῆτες ἐπέκεινοι~~ 2Cor.10.
καὶ εἰς τὸ Χεῖρα, by the gentleness of Christ. The Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Wisdom, is gentle: for gentleness is reckoned among Gal.5.
the fruits of this Spirit.

22.

How far then are they from this Wisdom which is from above, who (with the Spanish beggar) will not alter one step of their gravity for all the lasses of the Law, for all the entreaties of friends, nor for the preservation of publick peace? Yea, who had rather see Heaven and Earth blended together, than to abate any thing of their own humours. Certainly, if this Wisdom be not *σαμονίωδες*, yet it looks very like it: and represents men as much resembling that sort of persons, whom the Apostle describes to be *τολυνται* and *αὐθαδεσι*, *presumptuous and self-willed*. This is none of the Fruits of the Wisdom that is from above. And indeed, there are so few endued with this Virtue of gentleness, that we may leave this, with a lamentation, and proceed to the

Fourth Pillar in the House of Wisdom, *viz. Easiness to be entreated*: it is *εὐεύθυνος*. *Iar.* 4th. Pil.
Which word may either signifie an easiness to believe any good of another, or that may mitigate his fault; and so our Doctor Ham-
mond

mōnd paraphra'eth it: and thus it casts a frowning eye upon those that are very prone to *evil surmises*, malignant interpretations of other mens actions and intentions, to calumniating and backbiting their Brethren:

2 Pet. 2. *10.* and who δόξας τοις τρίποντι βλασφημεῖτε, are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, at least in their secret discourses. A sin which, as it is very common, so is it very contrary to the nature of that Charity, which, as the Apostle **1 Cor. 13.** tells us, doth not rejoice in iniquity, in evil and **6,7.** false reports of others, but believeth all things and hopeth the best; and consequently it is contrary to the nature of Heavenly Wisdom.

But Beza renders this word, *Obtemperans*; and Tremellius out of the Syriack version, *Obsequens*. It is the property of the Wisdom that is from above, to be obedient to Government. How great care God hath taken to preserve the Authority of the Magistrates, is evident by his investing them with the title of *Father and Mother*, in the fifth Commandment. Yea, he calls them **Psal. 82.5** (Elohim) gods: and joyns the fear of the Lord and the King together: (jirah eth Je-
Prov. 24. hovah ve hammelech) *Fear thou the Lord and the King*, Nor hath he in the New Testament been more remiss in exhorting to obedience, even when they were subject to the worst of men for their Governours: but exhorts us to be obedient, not onely διὸ τὴν ὁργὴν, for fear of wrath and punishment, but

but chiefly, *διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν*, for Conscience sake, and in obedience to Gods Command- Rom. 13. ment. So strange is it, that any man can 5. pretend Conscience as an encouragement to disobedience. And St. Peter exhorts us ^{1 Pet. 2.} to be obedient to every ordinance of man, ^{13.} *διὰ τὸν κύριον*, for the Lords sake: Strange then it is that any can pretend obedience to God, as opposite to their Allegiance to Cæsar.

Piety, is defined by Cicero, to be *Justitia erga Deos*: And St. Augustine explains it, It Na. Deor. is *Verus cultus veri Dei*, the right way of worshipping the true God. Ludovicus Vives, Aug. Civ. tell us, that Piety is also taken for reverence D. I. 4. c. to our Elders and Superiors: Which ^{23.} makes it the more strange, that any should ^{Comment.} in Aug. oppose Piety to that reverence and obedience, which they owe to their Parents and Superiors.

What shall we then say of them, who, as Tacitus, the Historian saith of Otho's Souldiers, *Jus- Hist. I. 2.* *fa Ducum interpretari quam exequi malunt*, are nimbler at disputing, then at obeying the commands of their Governours? How far are they from that *Wisdom which is from above*: There is no doubt but such persons are furnished with many pleas to colour and countenance their disobedience. Some will find fault with those that rule them: And no doubt but

Juvenal.
Sat. 18.

— *Facilis cuivis rigidi censura chachinni.*

he that is indued with a malicious mind towards any person, and carries a pestilent tongue in his head, may easily open his mouth against that mans person or actions: and *πρὸς μαρτυρίᾳ οὐ μεῖδει*, It is much easier to see faults in those that govern, then to rule well if our selves were in Authority.

He takes but little notice of the state of the present world, who is not sensible that one great cause of breeding and nourishing this malignant and disobedient temper in mens spirits, is, the multitude of Seducers, who creep into houses, and lead by the ears, not onely silly women, but even men also, who think themselves wiser then the rest of the world, both from the obedience of the Faith, & from their allegiance to the

Tacitus, King. Of whom we may say as *Tacitus* of Hist. I. the *Mathematicians in Rome*: They are,

Genus hominum potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax, quod in republicā nostrā & vetabitur semper & retinebitur: A sort of men disloyal to their Prince, Seducers to the people, whom the laws do condemn, but do not as yet prevail to restrain. These are they who

Gal. 3.17. zealously affect men but not well: and who indeed do fill them with that which our Apostle Jam. 3. calls *ζηλὸν τινὸν καὶ εὐδαίμονα*, bitter Envy and

14.

and Strife. These are so far from deserving the Title of the *Wisdom that is from above,* that they are rather to be reckoned among them, whom the Apostle calls *κυριοὺς καταφεύγοντας, despisers of Government :* And another Apostle, *κύματα ἄγρια θαλάσσης, raging waves of the Sea,* by whom ignorant and unstable souls are *κλυδωνίζόμενοι, tossed to and fro.* Whatsoever such men may pretend, the word of God tells us, that the *Wisdom that is from above, is, εὐπαιδεύσις, of an obedient temper.* But leaving this, let us advance towards the

¶ Fifth Pillar in this Edifice, and that is *5 Pillar.* μετὸν ἐλέες καὶ πάρπον ἀγαθῶν full of mercy and good fruits. St. Gregory Nazianzeno, Greg. exhorting to care for the poor, persuadeth Naz. us to works of Charity, in this manner. *Orat. 19.* If we believe St. Paul, yea Christ himself, Charity is to be esteemed the first and chief amongst those things that God commands, and the substance of the Law and the Prophets. And the branches of Charity, are, Taking care for the poor, and mercy and compassion towards our kindred: For God delights in no service so much as Mercy, because nothing is so suitable to his Nature, of whom it is said, *Mercy and Truth, go before his Face, and Mercy rejoiceth over Judgment.* And indeed as every Tree is known by his fruits, so hereby onely can a man be known to have a good root and principle

S within,

Psal. 89.

14.

Jam. 2.

13.

within, if he bring forth these good fruits in his life.

Lud. Viv. But as *Ludovicus Vives* tells us, that *Epicurus* held indeed that there were Gods, but in Aug. that they did not regard humane affairs, Civ. Dei. which is all one as to hold no Gods at all: so, many men hold and profess a faith, but such as is regardless of good works, which, as this Apostle tells us, is but a *dead faith*.

Jam. 2. St. *Augustine* sets forth many of the eminent ult. acts of some of the *Romans*: and, as he Aug. Civ. Dei. faith, If such low motives, as love to their Country, and desire of fame in the World, I. S. C. 18. as the Poet expresseth it,

Virgil. *Vicit amor patriæ, landumque immensa cu-*
Aeneid. pido.

if these Motives did extimulate *Brutus*, *Tor-*
quatus, *Camillus*, *Scævola*, *Curtius*, and
those other famous Hero's, to undertake such noble attempts, then what shame is it

Tit. 2. 14. for Christians, if the Love of Christ and hopes of heaven, do not make them Zeal-

Civ. D. *I. lous of good works*: But yet, as the said Fa-
21. c. 27. ther doth admonish us, we must not think our good works to be meritorious, or that some acts of Charity will make satisfaction for the leading of an evil life: But we must endeavour to be constant, and even in leading Luk. 17. a good life, and when we have done all we can, acknowledge our selves to be but unpro-
10. fitable

sitable servants. This is the property of the Wisdom that is from above. But let us now pass on to the

Sixth Pillar in this Structure, it is *ἀδιάκριτος*. 6. Pillar.
Ἰσός, which we render, without partiality : and in this sense it may shew us what Wisdom doth in a special manner belong to Magistrates in the execution of Justice, even not to respect persons in judgement, but to judge righteous judgement : Not to reverence the person of the rich, nor yet to favour the person of the poor : But to be like Aristides or Fabricius, that it may be as impossible to move them from the wayes of Justice, as to disturb the Sun in its course.

But (my Lords) I am confident you are so sensible of the obligations that lye upon you as to this, both from Conscience and Honour also, that I shall not need to speak any more of it : nor should I have said so much, if the Text had not drawn me to it.

But there are some that render this, Dr. Ham. without wavering or inconstancy in the in locum Faith; and so it will return to the same purpose with that of St. Paul. Those that are come to be perfect men, that are arrived at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that are filled with this Wisdom which is from above, are secured that they be no more like Children and Novices κλυδωνίζομενοι, tossed like Ships at Sea, and παριθόρμηνοι, carried about

bout like chaff with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lye in wait to deceive. And to this agrees that of our Saviour : Those that are built upon a solid Foundation, will stand fast against the assaults of wind and waves : and those that fall, do shew that they were never built upon any good Foundation of Divine and Heavenly Wisdom. *The Wisdom that is from above is fixed.*

But Beza renders it, *sine dissidio*; and Tremellius out of the Syriack, *sine disceptatione*, without wrangling or disputing. The *1 Tim. 6. Apostle tells us, that he is a man of a corrupt minde, and destitute of the Truth, who μὴ προσερχεται υγιαινεσ λόγοις, doth not come and resign up his judgement to a form of wholesome words : but is νοσῶν πνεῡματος και λογοπαχτιας, doth dote, or is sick about questions and strifes of words : the ordinary and natural Fruits whereof, are envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and παραδιατελεια, perverse disputings or gallings of one another, not so much with a design to finde out the Truth, as to cross and vex the adversary.* But, saith he, *Thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness.*

Ludov.
Vives.

We read of Anaxagoras, that because a stone fell out of the Air into the River Ægæos

gos in Thrace, he did therefore peremptorily hold an opinion, that the Heavens were made of stones ; and that the Sun was a fiery stone. Whereupon Euripides his Scholar, calleth it a Golden-Turfe. And we are still brain-sick in studying the secrets of Nature. One will take upon him to command the Sun to stand still, and the dull Earth to move round it, to save the Sun the labour of moving. Others are like Alexander, of whom the Satyrift

Unus Pelleo juveni non sufficit Orbis,

Juvenal.

Aestuat infelix angusto limite mundi,

Sat. 10.

Ut Gyare clausus scopulis, parvaque Seriphos.

This small Earthly-Globe is not wide enough for their over-grown Fancies to bustle in, and therefore they have added to it a New World in the Moon : To which yet they have not thus far attained , to set up a Post-office, that we might have some correspondence with the people of that Region. Others will needs fancy a *Communis anima mundi*, to save the divine Providence, the labour of looking to particular things in the World. Others dream of a long time of the Prä-existence of the Soul of man, before it came into the body, much like the Egyptians, that conceit themselves to have a Chronicle of ma-

ny thousands of years before the world began.

These and many other fancies in Philosophy, we may reasonably believe to have proceeded rather from an humour to oppose the vulgar Opinions, and desire to finde out something New under the Sun, then that men did verily believe such things to be so as they have attempted to make others believe.

Nor is the wantonness of mans wit content to vary in *Philosophy*, except they may have liberty to frame a new body of *Divinity* too. And sure 'tis strange, how some mens humours suit with disputing and opposing each other : Who doubtless would not embrace so many Paradoxes, were it not, that to be heterodox will gall other men, and make themselves appear to be some body in the world, by wearing a colour distinct from other men.

But we may say by too sad experience, that *Nimium altercando amittitur veritas*, men have muddled these clear Crystalline streams of Religion, by too much stirring in them, so that Truth can very hardly be discerned in the bottom. And indeed, *Pruritus disputandi scabies Ecclesiae*, This itch of disputing is one of the curses of the Law sent upon our Nation, for not keeping the Commandments of God : it hath taken off mens fingers from a zealous practising of good

good duties, to claw this itch of opposition, while the life and power of Godliness hath been almost forgotten amongst such people. Yea, it hath opened the mouths of Papists, and men of Atheistical spirits, to reproach the Protestant Religion, if not all Religion, doubting whether there be any such thing in reality, because the professors of it cannot agree about it.

It might have been a necessary act of charity to have digressed here a little, to have fortified us against those advantages that Papists and Atheists, are apt to take against our Church, by reason of these divisions: By telling the Atheist, that there were as great differences between the Platonists, and Peripateticks, the Stoicks, and Epicureans, and Academicks, as there are now amongst Christians: By telling the Papist, that the differences between the Thomists and Scotists, between the Jesuites and Secnlars, between the Jansenists and Sorbonists, are not inferior to those which they see amongst the Protestants. Besides, that the Church of England (properly so called) is like Jerusalem, a City compact together; and as for those that are turned aside to dangerous Sects and Errors, we may say, *They went out from us,* ^{1 Joh. 2.} because they were not of us. And I might refer both Papists and Atheists, to that pious and learned Father, St. Augustine, *de Civ. Dei. l. 18. c. 51.* where he sheweth, how the

Lord is pleased to suffer Errors, and Schisms in his Church, for the trial of our Faith, and for the benefit of the Church in the issue.

Greg. Naz. Orat. 10. But these things the time commands me to passe over: I shall therefore conclude this head, with that of St. *Gregory Nazianzene*: It is the first and chief wisdom to despise that wisdom, which consists in talking and subtlety of words, and in captiousness and opposition one of another. Leaving this then, let us proceed to view the

7 Pillar. Seventh and last Pillar in this building. The Wisdom that is from above, is, ἀνυπό-
ξεπτο. *Vultum non accipit*, saith Beza, it doth not regard the faces or outward shew of men: *Sine simulatione*, saith *Tremellius*, without counterfeiting or dissembling. *Diogenes Laertius*, reports of *Diogenes the Cynick*, his trampling on *Plato's* pride, *sed majori fastu*. And this *Cynick* would sometimes in the coldest time of *Winter*, go to bathing himself in cold water, to make the people admire and pity him. But *Plato* easily saw that it was not virtue, but vain-glory that made him do this, and perswaded the people to leave off taking notice of him, and he would presently be weary of these tricks. So the strange austerities and affected singularities of many of our deluded people, it is to be feared, arise from no better ground. And yet, as the Poet saith of covetousness,

Fallit

*Diog.
Laert.*

*Fallit at hoc vitium specie.virtutis & umbrâ,
Cum sit triste habitu, vultuque & ueste Invenit
severum.*

Sat. 14.

These austteries and singularities, are apt to impose upon injudicious people, as pieces of *Self-denyal*, and singular parts of *morthification*, and forsaking of the world.

But there hath been a far worse sort of Hypocrisie practised in our dayes, like that of *Nero*, of whom the *Historian* speaks, *Quoties fugas aut cedes jussit, &c.* When he had appointed to banish or murther any man, then he must have publick thanksgivings to the gods: and that which before *Anual*, was a sign of the common weal, did then ^{Tacitus,} become a token of the common woe. How many of these *Jezebel-fasts* and thanksgivings have we seen? to the prophanation of the sacred Name of God, and to the scandal of our Religion: This was the fruit of that wisdom which the Apostle calls, *Sapientias, Devilish.*

But this subject of Hypocrisie, is too large to be entred upon at this time. I shall onely say, that he that onely seems to be a good Christian, hath onely the shew of Wisdom; but he alone that professeth himself, to be such as he ought to be, and is as good as he professeth himself, he hath *that wisdom which is from above.* For this is the bond and perfection of all the excellencies of this VVisdom, that it is *euwókeutō*, without Hypocrisie.

You

You have seen now the House of *VVisdom* surveyed, with its seven Pillars. Κεραίανον δέ
ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀρχομένοις: Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the Sum.

First, it is easie hence to judge, τις σοφὸς καὶ δημόσιος εὐεργέτης; who is a wise man among you, and endued with knowledge; even he that can shew out of a good conversation, these fruits with meekness of *VVisdom*; these Fruits, I say, which always grow upon the Tree of saving-knowledge. It is not enough to shew a man to be wise from above, to talk much of Religion and Purity, and of giving God his due; if in the mean time he detract from Cæsar's Rights; if he be not of a peaceable spirit, and to this end ready to depart from his own right; if he be not obedient to his Superiors, free from wrangling and unnecessary oppositions. Nor on the contrary is it sufficient to swagger for Cæsar, if men be of prophane and lewd lives, or Atheists as to matters of Religion. But, as our Saviour saith in another case, *These*

Luke 11. *things ought ye to have done, and not to leave*
 42. *the other undone:* So, I say, he that to the

Mat. 10. *Wisdom of the Serpent doth joyn the inn-*
 16. *cency of the Dove,* he that is both a good Christian and a good Subject, he hath the *VVisdom* that is from above.

But, alas! how little a Flock do such men make!

Rari

Rari quippe boni.—

said the *Satyrift*, good men are choise, and never choiser then now adays: *Non possumus Aug. in negare plures esse malos, &c.* saith St. *Augustine*. *Psal. 47.*
It caniot be denied, but the most men are bad, and that the bad are so many, that amongst them there can hardly be discerned a good grain of Corn in the Floor; but whosoever looks upon the Floor, may think there is nothing but chaff there.

Secondly, this discovers the substance of every mans duty, which he should endeavour to put in practice, even to follow peace *Heb. 12.* with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see God^{14.} To be no brawlers, but gentle. To be obedient to every ordinance of *Tit. 3.2.* man for the Lords sake. To be full of mercy *1 Pet. 2.* and good fruits: To avoid perverse disputings, *13.* such as are most suitable to men of corrupt mindes: And finally, to fear the Lord, and *1 Tim. 6.* serve him in sincerity. To profess our selves *5.* to be such as God requires us to be: and to *Josh. 24.* endeavour to walk up to our profession: As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace *Gal. 6.* be on them and Mercy, and upon the Israel of *16.* God.

Finally, my Lords, I know you are sensible whom it is that you are to patronize, even them that are endued with this Wisdom that is from above: and against whom you

you are to exercise the sword of Justice, even them that are opposite to it. You are sent by his Majesty, as his Vice-Gerents, *τοις εἰδίκοντιν μὲν κακοποιῶν, ἔταιρον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν.* to the terror of evil doers, and to the praise and encouragement of them that dwell well. Them therefore that are prophane, and opposite to Purity, or turbulent and opposite to Peace, or factious and disobedient, your Lordships will please to observe them as the fit objects of the censures of the Law. But those that are good Christians, and good Subjects; whose practice is that *σεβεῖν κα-
θητὰ καὶ αὐλαῖτε,* that pure Religion and undefiled: who are first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be perswaded to obedience, full of mercy and good fruits, free from partiality, wrangling, and hypocrisy, your Lordships will please to own them with your Favour and Patronage.

Now the Lord of Heaven, who alone giveth this Wisdom, and out of whose mouth Pro. 2.6. proceedeth Knowledge and Understanding; and Jam. 1.5. who hath bidden us, If we want wisdom, to ask it of him, deliver us from this wisdom which is Earthly, Sensual, Devilish; and teach us this Wisdom that is from above, 1 Pet. 1.16. which may make us holy as he is holy; and also to study to be quiet, and to do our own business: That so being Lovers and Promoters of Peace, we may receive the reward of Righteousness, even the peace and favour of

of God in this life, and the everlasting enjoyment of his blessed presence and love in Jam. 3.
the life to come. And that alone through 18.

thine al sufficient Merits, blessed Jesus:

To whom, with the Father, and the
Holy Ghost; three Persons, and
one most glorious and infinite
Deity, let us give, as is most
due, all Honour and Glo-
ry, world without
end, Amen.

F I N I S.
